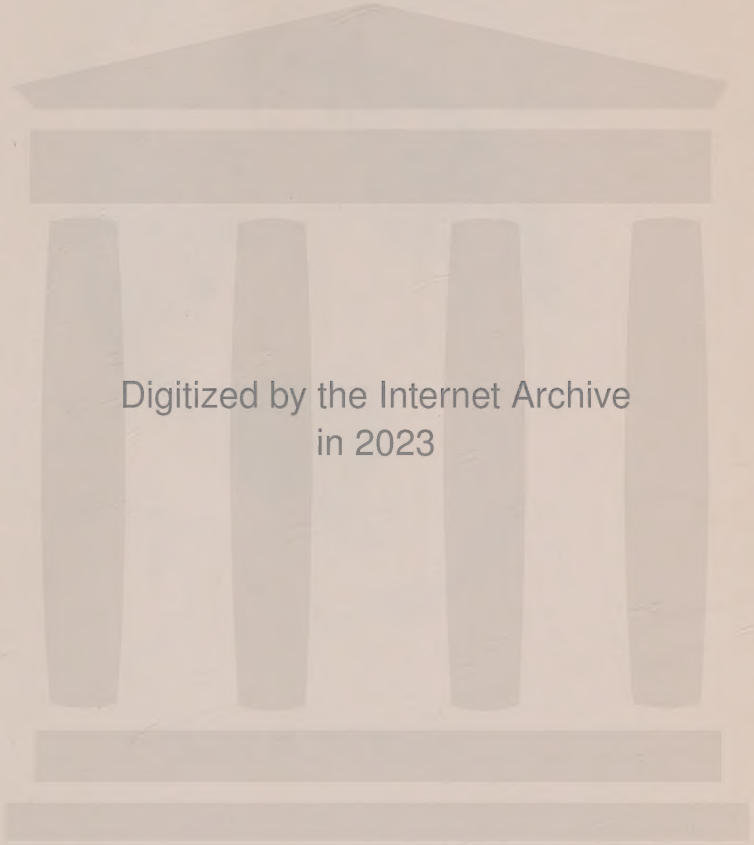
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RING–A–ROUND

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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TORONTO

The Scissor Man

RING-A-ROUND

A Collection of Verse
for Boys and Girls

by

MILDRED P. HARRINGTON

Pictures by

CORYDON BELL

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1930

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TO MY MOTHER

AND

NIECES AND NEPHEWS
PATRICIA, JIMMY, WHITTEN,
NANCY AND NATALIE

INTRODUCTION

RING-A-ROUND was started when Patricia was born. Her aunt wanted just the right book to introduce her to the magic world of poetry as soon as she should respond to rhythm and sound. But of course no book seemed just right for Patricia; so her aunt began compiling a new book of poetry for very little children "under six."

When Patricia was two, a book with many poems bound in soft blue leather, in loose-leaf form, was ready. There were poems about little animals of field and wood; there were poems about things familiar to a small child's everyday world; there were some poems to free her from childish fears and broaden her interests.

As Patricia neared six there were then two nephews in the family, and the favorite poems of the three were brought together. A grouping became necessary so that when Patricia wanted "more about fairies" or Jimmy demanded "a pome about my turtle" they could be easily found.

Some well-loved and familiar poems will be missed. Of course there is no Mother Goose, for that must belong complete to any nursery. So should "When We Were Very Young." There are no poems in dialect—they have no place in the life of a child so small that he is still acquiring a normal vocabulary. Patricia was always the final judge. The rhythm of line and the melody of syllables in such poems as "A Fragment of Sleepy Song" by Sydney Dobell and "For Snow" by Eleanor Farjeon particularly appealed to her.

If such a pre-school collection as this should arouse in some little children a love of poetry so that they continue to explore the wealth of the world's great poetry, the reason for publishing Patricia's book of verse will be realized.

Mildred P. Harrington

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THE ELVES' DANCE

Round about, round about
In a fairy ring-a,
Thus we dance, thus we dance
And thus we sing-a.
Trip and go, to and fro
Over this green-a,
All about, in and out,
For our brave Queen-a.

ANONYMOUS

THE DAY AROUND

THE RIVALS

I heard a bird at dawn
Singing sweetly on a tree,
That the dew was on the lawn,
And the wind was on the lea;
But I didn't listen to him,
For he didn't sing to me.

I didn't listen to him,
For he didn't sing to me
That the dew was on the lawn
And the wind was on the lea!
I was singing at the time,
Just as prettily as he!

I was singing all the time,
Just as prettily as he,
About the dew upon the lawn,
And the wind upon the lea!
So I didn't listen to him,
As he sang upon a tree!

James Stephens

ANIMAL CRACKERS

Animal crackers, and cocoa to drink,
That is the finest of suppers, I think;
When I'm grown up and can have what I please
I think I shall always insist upon these.

What do *you* choose when you're offered a treat?
When Mother says, "What would you like best to eat?"
Is it waffles and syrup, or cinnamon toast?
It's cocoa and animals that *I* love the most!

The kitchen's the cosiest place that I know:
The kettle is singing, the stove is aglow,
And there in the twilight, how jolly to see
The cocoa and animals waiting for me.

Daddy and Mother dine later in state,
With Mary to cook for them, Susan to wait;
But they don't have nearly as much fun as I
Who eat in the kitchen with Nurse standing by;
And Daddy once said he would like to be me
Having cocoa and animals once more for tea!

Christopher Morley

MY LITTLE BOAT

I have a little boat
I sail upon the sea;
A very pleasant task
Is sailing it for me.

For I am its master
And sail it as I please,
I hold its tether tight
When out on stormy seas.

And when I bring it home,
I put it safe away;
To lose my little boat
Would spoil the nicest day.

Sarah Jane S. Harrington

THE GRAVEL PATH

Baby mustn't frown,
When she tumbles down;
If the wind should change—ah me,
What a face her face would be!

Rub away the dirt,
Say she wasn't hurt;
What a world 'twould be—O my—
If all who fell began to cry!

Laurence Alma-Tadema

PEBBLES

Pebbles, pebbles, pebbles,
For miles and miles and miles;
A sloping bank of pebbles,
Round all the British Isles.

Grinding, grinding, grinding,
Where the heavy billows pound,
Till they are smooth as marbles,
And often just as round.

White ones, grey ones, brown ones,
Lime and slate and quartz;
Yellow ones and pink ones,
Pebbles of all sorts.

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
How strange it is to think
That after all these ages
In my tin pail they clink.

Jewels, jewels, jewels,
For every child like me,
Oh, how I love the pebbles,
Beside the sounding sea!

Edith King

BABY'S BREAKFAST

Baby wants his breakfast,
  Oh! what shall I do?
Said the cow, "I'll give him
  Nice fresh milk—moo-*oo!*"

Said the hen, "Cut-*dah*-cut!
  I have laid an egg
For the Baby's breakfast—
  Take it now, I beg!"

And the buzzing bee said,
"Here is honey sweet.
Don't you think the Baby
Would like that to eat?"

Then the baker kindly
Brought the Baby's bread.
"Breakfast is all ready,"
Baby's mother said;

"But before the Baby
Eats his dainty food,
Will he not say 'Thank you!'
To his friends so good?"

Then the bonny Baby
Laughed and laughed away.
That was all the "Thank you"
He knew how to say.

Emilie Poulsson

THE CUPBOARD

I know a little cupboard,
With a teeny tiny key,
And there's a jar of Lollypops
For me, me, me.

It has a little shelf, my dear,
As dark as dark can be,
And there's a dish of Banbury Cakes
For me, me, me.

I have a small fat grandmamma,
With a very slippery knee,
And she's Keeper of the Cupboard,
With the key, key, key.

And when I'm very good, my dear,
As good as good can be,
There's Banbury Cakes, and Lollypops
For me, me, me.

Walter De la Mare

BLUE SHOES

Little Blue Shoes
Mustn't go
Very far alone, you know.
Else she'll fall down,
Or lose her way;
Fancy—what
Would mamma say?
Better put her little hand
Under sister's wise command.
When she's a little older grown
Blue Shoes may go quite alone.

Kate Greenaway

A NURSERY SONG

Oh, Peterkin Pout and Gregory Grout
  Are two little goblins black;
Full oft from my house I've driven them out,
  But somehow they still come back.

They clamber up to the baby's mouth,
  And pull the corner down;
They perch aloft on the baby's brow,
  And twist it into a frown.

And one says "Must!" and t'other says "Can't!"
And one says "Shall!" and t'other says "Shan't!"
Oh, Peterkin Pout and Gregory Grout,
I pray you now, from my house keep out!

But Samuel Smile and Lemuel Laugh
Are two little fairies light;
They're always ready for fun and chaff,
And sunshine is their delight.

And when they creep into Baby's eyes
Why, there the sunbeams are;
And when they peep through her rosy lips,
Her laughter rings near and far.

And one says "Please!" and t'other says "Do!"
And both together say "I love you!"
So, Lemuel Laugh and Samuel Smile,
Come in, my dears, and tarry awhile!

Laura E. Richards

ACORNS

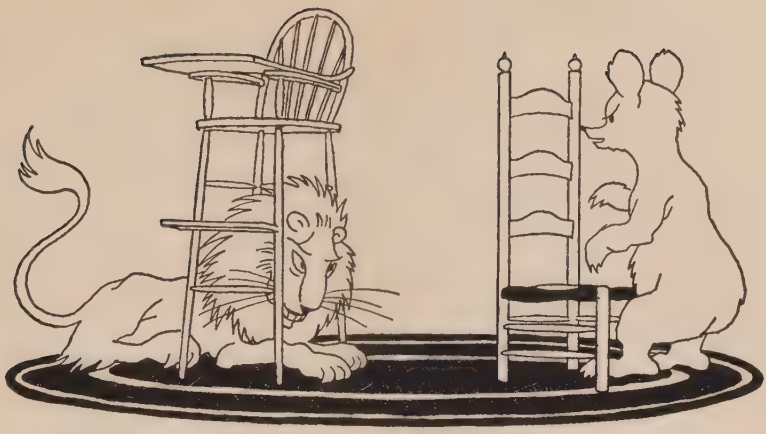
Oh, when the ripe acorns,
So smooth and so brown,
Get loose from their cups
And come pattering down,

What work is in store
For the girls and the boys,
First of all to collect them,
And then to make toys.

For they can make thimbles,
And tiny dolls' cradles,
And thorn-handled saucepans,
And egg-cups and ladles,

Extinguishers, flower-pots,
Baskets and rings,
And barrels and buckets,
And all kinds of things.

Edith King



WILD BEASTS

I will be a lion
  And you shall be a bear,
And each of us will have a den
  Beneath a nursery chair;
And you must growl and growl and growl,
  And I will roar and roar,
And then—why, then—you'll growl again,
  And I will roar some more!

Evaleen Stein

WHERE GO THE BOATS?

Dark brown is the river,
  Golden is the sand.
It flows along for ever,
  With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,
  Castles of the foam,
Boats of mine a-boating—
  Where will all come home?

On goes the river
  And out past the mill,
Away down the valley,
  Away down the hill.

Away down the river,
  A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
  Shall bring my boats ashore.

Robert Louis Stevenson

A JOURNEY

I never saw the hills so far
And blue, the way the pictures are;

And flowers, flowers growing thick,
But not a one for me to pick!

The land was running from the train
All blurry through the window-pane.

And then it all looked flat and still,
When up there jumped a little hill!

I saw the windows and the spires,
And sparrows sitting on the wires;

And fences, running up and down;
And then we cut straight through a town.

I saw a Valley, like a cup;
And ponds that twinkled, and dried up.

I counted meadows, that were burnt;
And there were trees—and then there weren't!

We crossed the bridges with a roar,
Then hummed, the way we went before.

And tunnels made it dark and light
Like open-work of day and night.

Until I saw the chimneys rise,
And lights and lights and lights, like eyes.

And when they took me through the door,
I heard It all begin to roar.—

I thought—as far as I could see—
That everybody wanted Me!

Josephine Preston Peabody

CORYDON
BELL

THE BARBER'S

Gold locks, and black locks,
  Red locks and brown,
Topknot to love-curl
  The hair wisps down;
Straight above the clear eyes,
  Rounded round the ears,
Snip-snap and snick-a-snick,
  Clash the Barber's shears;
Us, in the looking-glass,
  Footsteps in the street,
Over, under, to and fro,
  The lean blades meet;
Bay Rum or Bear's Grease,
  A silver groat to pay—
Then out a-shin-shan-shining
  In the bright, blue day.

Walter De la Mare

THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE

When the other children go,
Though there's no one seems to see
And there's no one seems to know,
Fanny comes and plays with me.

She has yellow curly hair
And her dress is always blue.
And she always plays quite fair
Everything I tell her to.

People say she isn't there—
They step over her at play
And they sit down in her chair
In the very rudest way.

It is queer they cannot know
When she's there for me to see!
When the other children go
Fanny comes and plays with me.

Margaret Widdemer

WATER NOISES

When I am playing by myself,
And all the boys are lost around,
Then I can hear the water go;
It makes a little talking sound.

Along the rocks below the tree,
I see it ripple up and wink;
And I can hear it saying on,
"And do you think? And do you think?"

A bug shoots by that snaps and ticks,
And a bird flies up beside the tree
To go into the sky to sing.
I hear it say, "Killdee, killdee!"

Or else a yellow cow comes down
To splash a while and have a drink.
But when she goes I still can hear
The water say, "And do you think?"

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

KITE-FLYING

I got a kite on New Year's Day,
A gold and scarlet treasure,
Upon whose face Yoshitsunè
Smiles out, as if in pleasure.

Rising first it went so high it made my eyelids shiver.
If I had a thousand miles of string, I'd let it sail forever!

The boys had many a bigger kite,
Such lots I never counted!
But past them all, a splendid sight,
Mine, like an eagle, mounted!

Flying straight toward the sun without a dip or quiver,
If I had a whole round world of string, I'd let it rise forever!

Mary Fenollosa

SEVEN TIMES ONE

There's no dew left on the daisies and clover,
  There's no rain left in heaven;
I've said my "seven times" over and over,
  Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter;
  My birthday lessons are done:
The lambs play always, they know no better;
  They are only one times one.

O Moon! in the night I have seen you sailing
  And shining so round and low;
You were bright! ah, bright! but your light is failing,
  You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon! have you done something wrong in heaven
  That God has hidden your face?
I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
  And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
  You've powdered your legs with gold;
O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow,
  Give me your money to hold!

O columbine! open your folded wrapper,
  Where two twin turtle-doves dwell!

O cuckoopint! toll me the purple clapper
That hangs in your clear green bell!

And show me your nest with the young ones in it;
I will not steal them away;
I am old! you may trust me, linnet, linnet,—
I am seven times one to-day.

Jean Ingelow

THE SCISSOR–MAN

Sing a song of Scissor-men,
"Mend a broken plate,
Bring your knives and garden shears,
I'll do them while you wait.
Buzz-a-wuzz! Buzz-a-wuzz!
Fast the wheel or slow,
Ticker Tacker! Ticker Tack!
Rivets in a row."

Sing a song of Scissor-men,
Sitting in the sun,
Sing it when the day begins,
Sing it when it's done.
Be it hard or be it soft,
Here's a jolly plan;
Sing to make the work go well,
Like the Scissor-man.

M. Nightingale

A SWING SONG

Swing, swing,
Sing, sing,
Here! my throne and I am a King!
Swing, sing,
Swing, sing,
Farewell, earth, for I'm on the wing!

Low, high,
Here I fly,
Like a bird through sunny sky;
Free, free,
Over the lea,
Over the mountain, over the sea!

Up, down,
Up and down,
Which is the way to London Town?
Where? Where?
Up in the air,
Close your eyes, and now you are there!

Soon, soon,
Afternoon,
Over the sunset, over the moon;
Far, far,
Over all bar,
Sweeping on from star to star!

No, no,
Low, low,
Sweeping daisies with my toe.
Slow, slow,
To and fro,
Slow—
slow—
slow—
slow.

William Allingham

PAPER BOATS

Day by day I float my paper boats one by one,
Down the running stream,
In big black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village where I live.
I hope that someone in some strange land will find them and know who I am.
I load my little boats with shiuli flowers from our garden, and hope that these blooms of dawn will be carried safely to land in the night.
I launch my paper boats and look up into the sky and see the little clouds setting their white bulging sails.
I know not what playmate of mine in the sky sends them down the air to race with my boats!

When night comes I bury my face in my arms and dream that my paper boats float on and on under the midnight stars.
The fairies of sleep are sailing in them, and the lading is their baskets full of dreams.

Rabindranath Tagore

CHECK

The Night was creeping on the ground!
She crept and did not make a sound,

Until she reached the tree: And then
She covered it, and stole again

Along the grass beside the wall!
I heard the rustling of her shawl

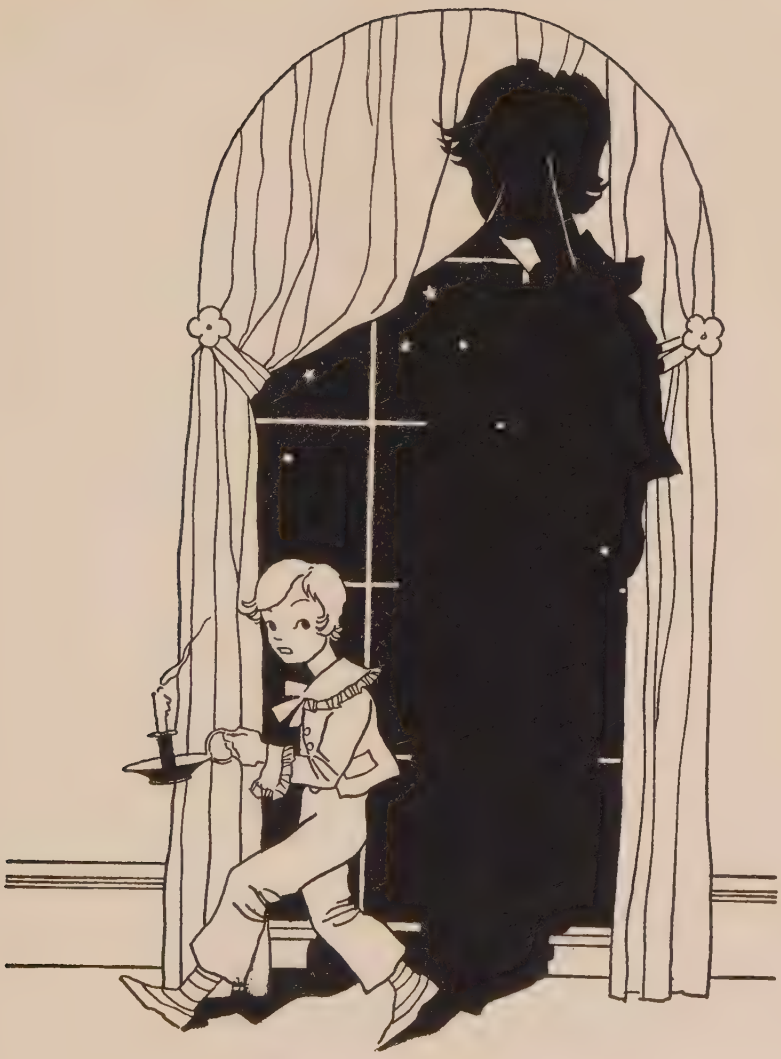
As she threw blackness everywhere,
Along the sky, the ground, the air,

And in the room where I was hid!
But, no matter what she did

To everything that was without,
She could not put my candle out!

So I stared at the Night! And she
Stared back solemnly at me!

James Stephens



THE YEAR AROUND

CORYDON
BELL

ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset, and the morning,
That brighten up the sky;—

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water,
We gather every day;—

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

Cecil Frances Alexander

PIPPA'S SONG

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

Robert Browning

PUSSY WILLOWS

I have some dainty pussies here
All dressed in soft gray fur,
But you might listen all day long
And not once hear them purr.

Nor do they run and frisk about,—
These pretty living things,

But closely round a slender twig
Each tiny pussy clings.

All through the winter's storms and cold,
These furry babies swung,
In cradle beds of shining brown,
On willow branches hung.

The rough winds sang their lullaby
And rocked them to and fro,
And all about their sleepy heads
Drifted the cold white snow.

But by and by the sunbeams warm
Peeped into each small bed,
And said: "Come, Pussies, waken now,
For winter days are fled."

So bravely come the Pussies forth,
Though still the cold wind blows,
And up and down the long, brown stems
They cling in shining rows.

But when the days grow long and bright,
And breezes not so cold,
They'll change their dress of silver fur
For robes of green and gold.

Mary E. Plummer

MARJORIE'S ALMANAC

Robins in the tree-top,
  Blossoms in the grass,
Green things a-growing
  Everywhere you pass;

Sudden little breezes,
  Showers of silver dew,
Black bough and bent twig
  Budding out anew;

Pine-tree and willow-tree,
  Fringed elm, and larch
Don't you think that Maytime's
  Pleasanter than March?

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

SPRING

The alder by the river
  Shakes out her powdery curls;
The willow buds in silver
  For little boys and girls.

The little birds fly over,
  And oh, how sweet they sing!
To tell the happy children
  That once again 'tis spring.

The gay green grass comes creeping
  So soft beneath their feet;
The frogs begin to ripple
  A music clear and sweet.

And buttercups are coming,
  And scarlet columbine,
And in the sunny meadows
  The dandelions shine.

And just as many daisies
  As their soft hands can hold
The little ones may gather,
  All fair in white and gold.

Here blows the warm red clover,
  There peeps the violet blue;
O happy little children!
  God made them all for you.

Celia Thaxter

THE TREE

The tree's early leaf-buds were bursting their brown;
"Shall I take them away?" said the Frost, sweeping down.
  "No, leave them alone,
  Till the blossoms have grown,"
Prayed the tree, while it trembled from rootlet to crown.

The tree bore his blossoms, and all the birds sung:
"Shall I take them away?" said the wind, as it swung.
  "No, leave them alone,

Till the berries have grown,"
Said the tree, while its leaflets quivering hung.

The tree bore its fruit in the midsummer glow:
Said the girl, "May I gather thy berries or no?"
"Yes, dear, all thou canst see:
Take them; all are for thee,"
Said the tree, while it bent its laden boughs low.

Björnsterne Björnson

OH, FAIR TO SEE

Oh, fair to see
Bloom-laden cherry tree,
Arrayed in sunny white:
An April day's delight,
Oh, fair to see!

Oh, fair to see
Fruit-laden cherry tree,
With balls of shining red
Decking a leafy head,
Oh, fair to see!

Christina G. Rossetti

CHILD'S SONG IN SPRING

The silver birch is a dainty lady,
She wears a satin gown;
The elm tree makes the old churchyard shady,
She will not live in town.

The English oak is a sturdy fellow,
He gets his green coat late;
The willow is smart in a suit of yellow,
While brown the beech trees wait.

Such a gay green gown God gives the larches—
As green as He is good!
The hazels hold up their arms for arches
When Spring rides through the wood.

The chestnut's proud and the lilac's pretty,
The poplar's gentle and tall,
But the plane tree's kind to the poor dull city—
I love him best of all!

E. Nesbit

BABY SEED SONG

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
Are you awake in the dark?
Here we lie cosily, close to each other:
Hark to the song of the lark—
"Waken!" the lark says, "waken and dress you;
Put on your green coats and gay,
Blue sky will shine on you, sunshine caress you—
Waken! 'tis morning—'tis May!"

Little brown brother, oh! little brown brother,
What kind of flower will you be?
I'll be a poppy—all white, like my mother;
Do be a poppy like me.
What! You're a sunflower! How I shall miss you
When you're grown golden and high!
But I shall send all the bees up to kiss you;
Little brown brother, good-bye.

E. Nesbit

THE COMING OF SPRING

I am coming, little maiden,
With the pleasant sunshine laden,
With the honey for the bee,
With the blossom for the tree,
With the flower and the leaf—
Till I come the time is brief.

I am coming, I am coming,
Hark! the little bee is humming;
See, the lark is soaring high
In the bright and sunny sky;
And the gnats are on the wing,
Little maiden, now is Spring.

See the yellow catkins cover
All the slender willows over,
And on mossy banks so green
Star-like primroses are seen;
And, their clustering leaves below,
White and purple violets blow.

Hark! the little lambs are bleating,
And the cawing rooks are meeting
In the elms,—a noisy crowd;
All the birds are singing loud;
And the first white butterfly
In the sun goes flitting by.

Little maiden, look around thee,
Green and flowery fields surround thee;
Every little stream is bright;
All the orchard trees are white;
And each small and waving shoot
Has for thee sweet flower or fruit.

Turn thy eyes to earth and heaven:
God for thee the spring hath given.
Taught the birds their melodies,
Clothed the earth, and cleared the skies,
For thy pleasure or thy food:
Pour thy soul in gratitude.
So mayst thou 'mid blessings dwell.
Little maiden, fare thee well.

Mary Howitt

CLOUDS

The sky is full of clouds to-day,
  And idly, to and fro,
Like sheep across the pasture, they
  Across the heavens go.
I hear the wind with merry noise
  Around the housetops sweep,
And dream it is the shepherd boys,—
  They're driving home their sheep.

The clouds move faster now; and see!
  The west is red and gold.
Each sheep seems hastening to be
  The first within the fold.
I watch them hurry on until
  The blue is clear and deep,
And dream that far beyond the hill
  The shepherds fold their sheep.

Then in the sky the trembling stars
  Like little flowers shine out,
While Night puts up the shadow bars,
  And darkness falls about.
I heard the shepherd wind's good-night—
  "Good-night and happy sleep!"
And dream that in the east, all white,
  Slumber the clouds, the sheep.

Frank Dempster Sherman

BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS

Boats sail on the rivers,
  And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
  Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their Mother's breast,
As she dances about in the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under;
And then again I dissolve it in rain
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

RIDING BY MOONLIGHT

From the tall hill-top some great star
Falls to the west afar and afar,

Out of the glistening gorge below
The orient moon swims full and slow.

Hair dishevelled and sleeves blown wide,
Into the kind cool night I ride.

Faint winds free strange scents anew.
Moon-paled maples bright with dew,

Dripping dreams from bough to bough
Sigh to my lute, Why sleepest thou?

Hands on the waiting strings fall mute.
Low my heart answers—"I am the lute."

Translated by Lancelot A. Cranmer-Byng
From the Song Collection.

THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all—
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?
Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

Robert Louis Stevenson

HIE AWAY

Hie away, hie away,
Over bank and over brae,
Where the copsewood is the greenest,
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
Where the lady-fern grows strongest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
Where the black-cock sweetest sips it,
Where the fairy latest trips it:
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green,
Over bank and over brae,
Hie away, hie away.

Walter Scott

FERN SONG

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern,
And spread out your palms again,
And say, "Tho' the sun
Hath my vesture spun,
He had laboured, alas, in vain,
But for the shade
That the Cloud hath made,
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."
Then laugh and upturn
All your fronds, little Fern,
And rejoice in the beat of the rain!

John B. Tabb

JOY

I rock in the heart of the rose,
I bathe in the clear bright dew,
I float in the breeze, the warm fragrant breeze,
I revel in whispers of tall leafy trees
And bask in the sun's golden glow.

I ride on the crest of the wave,
I swim through the ocean's deep.
I sail through the blue, the glorious blue,
And sometimes ride on the storm cloud too,
And follow the lightning's leap.

Matilda Hutchinson Turner

NIGHT

The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night.

. . . . . .

William Blake

THE LITTLE SYCAMORE

The little Sycamore
Which she planted with her hand
Begins to speak,
And her words are as drops of honey.
She is charming, her bower is green,
Greener than the papyrus.
She is laden with fruit
Redder than the ruby.
The color of her leaves is as glass,
Her stem is as the color of the opal,
It is cool in her shadow.

Translated by James Baikie
From the Turin Papyrus

TREES

The Oak is called the King of Trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,
The Pear-tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fir-tree useful timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

Sara Coleridge

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

PAN

Be still, ye wooded cliffs and waterfalls
  And mingled bleatings from the murmuring meads!
For Pan with sweetly ringing music calls,
  Laying his lip on pipe of bounden reeds:
And round him, dancing swift with glimmering feet,
Nymphs of the forest and the fountain meet.

Translated by A. J. Butler
From the Greek Anthology

THE WONDERFUL WORLD

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful World,
With the wonderful water round you curled.
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully drest.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree—
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the top of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens, and cliffs and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, World, at all;
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
My mother kissed me and said, quite gay,

"If the wonderful World is great to you,
And great to father and mother, too,
You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot!
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!"

William Brighty Rands

COLOR

What is pink? a rose is pink
By a fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? Why, an orange,
Just an orange!

Christina G. Rossetti

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
  The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
  The wind is passing by.

Christina G. Rossetti

WITH THE WINDS

Take my hand and let us run
With the winds—out in the sun.
We're so happy we could fly
If the wind would blow us high.

See the cress beside the way!
Pick a bit but do not stay:—
Blue as deepest summer skies
Little flowers greet our eyes.

Here's a fluffy feather-blow!
Make a wish and let it go.
It may stop—the wish keeps going
On where magic winds are blowing.

Baby clouds all white and new
Cuddle down up in the blue;
Taking naps before they go
On their journeys high and low.

Take my hand and we will run
With the wind—out in the sun.
Oh, the joy of being free!
Oh, the joy of you and me!

Matilda Hutchinson Turner

THE SEA SHELL

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
  Sing me a song, O please!
A song of ships, and sailor men,
  Of parrots and tropical trees;
Of islands lost in the Spanish Main
Which no man ever may find again,
Of fishes and corals under the waves,
And sea-horses stabled in great green caves—
Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing of the things you know so well.

Amy Lowell

HORSES OF THE SEA

The horses of the sea
  Rear a foaming crest,
But the horses of the land
  Serve us the best.

The horses of the land
  Munch corn and clover,
While the foaming sea-horses
  Toss and turn over.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE WORLD'S MUSIC

The world's a very happy place,
  Where every child should dance and sing,
And always have a smiling face,
  And never sulk for anything.

I waken when the morning's come,
  And feel the air and light alive
With strange sweet music like the hum
  Of bees about their busy hive.

The linnets play among the leaves
  At hide-and-seek, and chirp and sing;
While, flashing to and from the eaves,
  The swallows twitter on the wing.

The twigs that shake, and boughs that sway,
And tall old trees you could not climb,
And winds that come, but cannot stay,
Are gaily singing all the time.

From dawn to dark the old mill-wheel
Makes music, going round and round;
And dusty-white with flour and meal,
The miller whistles to its sound.

The brook that flows beside the mill,
As happy as a brook could be,
Goes singing its own song until
It learns the singing of the sea.

For every wave upon the sands
Sings songs you never tire to hear,
Of laden ships from sunny lands,
Where it is summer all the year.

And if you listen to the rain
When leaves and birds and bees are dumb,
You hear it pattering on the pane,
Like Andrew beating on his drum.

The coals beneath the kettle croon,
And clap their hands and dance in glee;
And even the kettle hums a tune
To tell you when it's time for tea.

The world is such a happy place
That children, whether big or small,
Should always have a smiling face,
And never, never sulk at all.

Gabriel Setoun

SEPTEMBER

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest
In every meadow nook;
And asters by the brook-side
Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
  September days are here,
With summer's best of weather
  And autumn's best of cheer.
. . . . . .

Helen Hunt Jackson

THE WIND AND THE LEAVES

"Come, little leaves," said the wind one day,
"Come over the meadows with me and play.
Put on your dresses of red and gold;
For summer is gone, and the days grow cold."

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all.
O'er the brown field then they danced and flew
Singing the soft little songs they knew.

Dancing and whirling, the little leaves went,
Winter had called them, and they were content
Soon, fast asleep on their earthy beds,
The snow laid a coverlet over their heads.

George Cooper

JACK FROST

The door was shut, as doors should be,
Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see;
And left your windows silver white.

He must have waited till you slept;
And not a single word he spoke,
But pencilled o'er the panes and crept
Away again before you woke.

And now you cannot see the hills
Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane;
But there are fairer things than these
His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
Hills and dales, and streams and fields;
And knights in armour riding by,
With nodding plumes and shining shields.

And here are little boats, and there
Big ships with sails spread to the breeze;
And yonder, palm trees waving fair
Or islands set in silver seas.

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
  And herds of cows and flocks of sheep;
And fruits and flowers and all the things
  You see when you are sound asleep.

For creeping softly underneath
  The door when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe,
  And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window pane
  In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake you see again
  The lovely things you saw in dream.

Gabriel Setoun

WHAT THE WINDS BRING

Which is the Wind that brings the cold?
  The North Wind, Freddy, and all the snow;
And the sheep will scamper into the fold
  When the North begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the heat?
  The South Wind, Katy; and corn will grow,
And peaches redden for you to eat,
  When the South begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the rain?
The East Wind, Arty; and farmers know
That cows come shivering up the lane
When the East begins to blow.

Which is the Wind that brings the flowers?
The West Wind, Bessy; and soft and low
The birdies sing in the summer hours
When the West begins to blow.

Edmund Clarence Stedman

FOR SNOW

Oh the falling Snow!
Oh the falling Snow!
Where does it all come from?
Whither does it go?
Never never laughing,
Never never weeping,
Falling in its Sleep,
Forever ever sleeping—
From what Sleep of Heaven
Does it flow, and go
Into what Sleep of Earth,
The falling, falling Snow?

Eleanor Farjeon

WINTER NIGHT

Blow, wind, blow!
Drift the flying snow!
Send it twirling, whirling overhead!
There's a bedroom in a tree
Where, snug as snug can be,
The squirrel nests in his cosy bed.

Shriek, wind, shriek!
Make the branches creak!
Battle with the boughs till break o' day!
In a snow-cave warm and tight,
Through the icy winter night
The rabbit sleeps the peaceful hours away.

Call, wind, call,
In entry and in hall,
Straight from off the mountain white and wild!
Soft purrs the pussy-cat,
On her little fluffy mat,
And beside her nestles close her furry child.

Scold, wind, scold,
So bitter and so bold!
Shake the windows with your tap, tap, tap!
With half-shut, dreamy eyes
The drowsy baby lies
Cuddled closely in his mother's lap.

Mary Frances Butts

CORYDON

THE GARDEN YEAR

January brings the snow,
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,
To stir the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit;
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant;
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast;
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

Sara Coleridge

BIRDS, BEASTS AND FLOWERS

THE BIRDS' NESTS

The skylark's nest among the grass
And waving corn is found;
The robin's on a shady bank,
With oak leaves strewn around.

The wren builds in an ivied thorn,
Or old and ruined wall;
The mossy nest, so covered in,
You scarce can see at all.

The martins build their nests of clay,
In rows beneath the eaves;
While silvery lichens, moss and hair,
The chaffinch interweaves.

The cuckoo makes no nest at all,
But through the wood she strays
Until she finds one snug and warm,
And there her eggs she lays.

The sparrow has a nest of hay,
With feathers warmly lined;
The ring-dove's careless nest of sticks
On lofty trees we find.

Rooks build together in a wood,
And often disagree;
The owl will build inside a barn
Or in a hollow tree.

The black bird's nest of grass and mud
In brush and bank is found;
The lapwing's darkly spotted eggs
Are laid upon the ground.

The magpie's nest is girt with thorns
In leafless tree or hedge;
The wild duck and the water hen
Build by the water's edge.

Birds build their nests from year to year,
  According to their kind,—
Some very neat and beautiful,
  Some easily designed.

The habits of each little bird,
  And all its patient skill,
Are surely taught by God Himself
  And ordered by His will.

Anonymous

THE BLUEBIRD

I know the song that the bluebird is singing,
Out in the apple-tree where he is swinging.
Brave little fellow! the skies may be dreary,
Nothing cares he while his heart is so cheery.

Hark! how the music leaps out from his throat!
Hark! was there ever so merry a note?
Listen awhile, and you'll hear what he's saying,
Up in the apple-tree, swinging and swaying:

"Dear little blossoms, down under the snow,
You must be weary of winter, I know;
Hark! while I sing you a message of cheer,
Summer is coming and spring-time is here!

"Little white snowdrop, I pray you arise;
Bright yellow crocus, come, open your eyes;
Sweet little violets hid from the cold,
Put on your mantles of purple and gold;
Daffodils, daffodils, say do you hear?
Summer is coming, and spring-time is here!"

Emily Huntington Miller

THE SECRET

We have a secret, just we three,
The robin, and I, and the sweet cherry-tree;
The bird told the tree, and the tree told me,
And nobody knows it but just us three.

But of course the robin knows it best,
Because he built the—I shan't tell the rest;
And laid the four little—something in it—
I'm afraid I shall tell it every minute.

But if the tree and the robin don't peep,
I'll try my best the secret to keep;
Though I know when the little birds fly about
Then the whole secret will be out.

Anonymous

THE BROWN THRUSH

There's a merry brown thrush sitting up in the tree.
He's singing to me! He's singing to me!
And what does he say, little girl, little boy?
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
Don't you hear? Don't you see?
Hush! Look! In my tree,
I'm as happy as happy as can be!"

And the brown thrush keeps singing, "A nest do you see
And five eggs, hid by me in the juniper tree?
Don't meddle! Don't touch! little girl, little boy,
Or the world will lose some of its joy!
Now I'm glad! Now I'm free!
And I always shall be,
If you never bring sorrow to me."

So the merry brown thrush sings away in the tree,
To you and to me, to you and to me;
And he sings all the day, little girl, little boy,
"Oh, the world's running over with joy!
But long it won't be,
Don't you know? Don't you see?
Unless we're as good as can be."

Lucy Larcom

THE BIRD'S NEST

Eliza and Anne were extremely distress'd,
To see an old bird fly away from her nest,
And leave her poor young ones alone;
The pitiful chirping they heard from the tree
Made them think it as cruel as cruel could be,
Not knowing for what she had flown.

But when with a worm in her bill she return'd
They smil'd on each other, soon having discern'd
She had not forsaken her brood!
But like their dear mother was careful and kind,
Still thinking of them, though she left them behind
To seek for them suitable food.

Elizabeth Turner

HAPPY BIRDS

Happy, happy little birds,
Singing gaily without words;
Chirping, twittering all the day,
Building nests wherein to lay
Little eggs that soon will be
Little birds that sing to me.

Sarah Jane S. Harrington

CORYDON
BELL

THE OWL

When cats run home and light is come,
  And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
  And the whirring sail goes round,
  And the whirring sail goes round;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
  And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
  Twice or thrice his roundelay,
  Twice or thrice his roundelay;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

Alfred Tennyson

THE SEA GULL

All day long o'er the ocean I fly,
My white wings beating fast through the sky,
I hunt fishes all down the bay
And ride on rocking billows in play.

All night long in my rock home I rest,
Away up on a cliff is my nest,
The waves murmur, murmur below
And winds fresh from the sea o'er me blow.

Gaelic Folk-Song

CHICKADEE

The chickadee in the apple tree
Talks all the time very gently.
He makes me sleepy.
I rock away to the sea-lights.
Far off I hear him talking
The way smooth pebbles
Drop into water . . .
Chickadee-dee-dee . . .
Chick-a-*dee-dee-dee* . . .

Hilda Conkling

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ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnet, and thrush say, "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings; and forever sings he—
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me!"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

LADY-BIRD

Lady-bird, lady-bird! fly away home!
The field mouse has gone to her nest,
The daisies have shut up their sleepy red eyes,
And the bees and the birds are at rest.

Lady-bird, lady-bird! fly away home!
The glow-worm is lighting her lamp,
The dew's falling fast, and your fine speckled wings
Will flag with the close-clinging damp.

Lady-bird; lady-bird! fly away home!
The fairy bells tinkle afar!
Make haste, or they'll catch you, and harness you fast
With a cobweb, to Oberon's car.

Caroline B. Southey

THE WANDERING ANT

An ant was running in the grass
  A-searching for his sandy home:
"Oh, woe is me!" he cried. "Alas,
  To what a sorry fate I've come!"

"The gardener has cut the lawn—
  Our village streets are all awry,—
I cannot tell the way I've gone,
  The houses all so tumbled lie!"

"What shall I do? What shall I do?
  I have a splendid cooky crumb
To give my children, Tim and Sue,—
  To what a sorry fate I've come!"

Corydon Bell

LITTLE SNAIL

I saw a little snail
Come down the garden walk.
He wagged his head this way . . . that way . . . .
Like a clown in a circus.
He looked from side to side
As though he were from a different country.
I have always said he carries his house on his back . . .
To-day in the rain
I saw that it was his umbrella!

Hilda Conkling

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WHITE BUTTERFLIES

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,
Frail, pale wings for the wind to try,
Small white wings that we scarce can see,
Fly!

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh;
All to the haven where each would be,
Fly!

Algernon Charles Swinburne

GRASSHOPPER GREEN

Grasshopper green is a comical chap;
He lives on the best of fare.
Bright little trousers, jacket, and cap,
These are his summer wear.
Out in the meadow he loves to go,
Playing away in the sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low,
Summer's the time for fun.

Grasshopper green has a quaint little house;
It's under the hedge so gay.
Grandmother Spider, as still as a mouse,
Watches him over the way.
Gladly he's calling the children, I know,
Out in the beautiful sun;
It's hopperty, skipperty, high and low,
Summer's the time for fun.

Anonymous

A DREAM

Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, wildered, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn.
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke, I heard her say:

"Oh my children! do they cry?
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me."

Pitying, I dropped a tear;
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied: "What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

"I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum:
Little wanderer, hie thee home!"

William Blake

THE LITTLE TURTLE

There was a little turtle.
He lived in a box.
He swam in a puddle.
He climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at a mosquito.
He snapped at a flea.
He snapped at a minnow.
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito.
He caught the flea.
He caught the minnow.
But he didn't catch me.

Vachel Lindsay

DUCKS' DITTY

All along the backwater,
Through the rushes tall,
Ducks are a-dabbling,
Up tails all!

Ducks' tails, drakes' tails,
Yellow feet a-quiver,
Yellow bills all out of sight
Busy in the river!

Slushy green undergrowth
Where the roach swim—
Here we keep our larder,
Cool and full and dim.

Everyone for what he likes!
We like to be

Heads down, tails up,
Dabbling free!

High in the blue above
Swifts whirl and call—
We are down a-dabbling,
Up tails all!

Kenneth Grahame

MICE

Mice! if you come for bread, I pray you please
  Depart and quit this humble cot of mine:
For elsewhere you may nibble figs and cheese
  And on the leavings of the table dine.
But if you set your teeth upon my books,
Your feast will prove less merry than it looks.

Translated by A. J. Butler
From the Greek Anthology

ON THE BRIDGE

If I could see a little fish—
That is what I just now wish!
I want to see his great round eyes
Always open in surprise.

I wish a water-rat would glide
Slowly to the other side;
Or a dancing spider sit
On the yellow flags a bit.

I think I'll get some stones to throw,
And watch the pretty circles show.
Or shall we sail a flower-boat,
And watch it slowly—slowly float?

That's nice—because you never know
How far away it means to go;
And when to-morrow comes, you see,
It may be in the great wide sea.

Kate Greenaway

THE WOOD-MOUSE

Do ye know the little wood-mouse,
  That pretty little thing,
That sits amongst the forest leaves,
  Beside the forest spring?

Its fur is red as the chestnut,
And it is small and slim,
It leads a life most innocent
Within the forest dim.

'Tis a timid, gentle creature,
And seldom comes in sight;
It has a long and wiry tail,
And eyes both black and bright.

It makes its nest of soft, dry moss,
In a hole so deep and strong;
And there it sleeps secure and warm,
The dreary winter long.

And though it keeps no calendar
It knows when flowers are springing;
And waketh to its summer life,
When nightingales are singing.

Upon the bough the squirrel sits,
The wood-mouse plays below;
And plenty of food it finds itself
Where the beech and chestnut grow.

In the hedge-sparrow's nest it sits,
When the summer brood is fled,
And picks the berries from the bough
Of the hawthorn overhead.

I saw a little wood-mouse once,
  Like Oberon in his hall,
With the green, green moss beneath his feet,
  Sit under a mushroom tall.

I saw him sit and his dinner eat,
  All under the forest tree;
His dinner of chestnut ripe and red,
  And he ate it heartily.

I wish you could have seen him there:
  It did my spirit good,
To see the small thing God had made,
  Thus eating in the wood.

I saw that He regardeth them—
  Those creatures weak and small;
Their table in the wild is spread
  By Him who cares for all!

Mary Howitt

A FRIEND IN THE GARDEN

He is not John the gardener,
  And yet the whole day long
Employs himself most usefully
  The flower-beds among.

He is not Tom the pussy-cat;
And yet the other day,
With stealthy stride and glistening eye,
He crept upon his prey.

He is not Dash, the dear old dog,
And yet, perhaps, if you
Took pains with him and petted him,
You'd come to love him too.

He's not a blackbird, though he chirps.
And though he once was black;
And now he wears a loose, grey coat,
All wrinkled on the back.

He's got a very dirty face,
And very shining eyes!
He sometimes comes and sits indoors;
He looks—and p'r'aps is—wise.

But in a sunny flower-bed
He has his fixed abode;
He eats the things that eat my plants—
He is a friendly TOAD.

Juliana Horatia Ewing

THE DAISY FIELD

I ran along the daisy-field;
It made the daisies dip and yield
And leave a path where I went by—
They nearly were as tall as I.

The sky was blue and smooth and bright,
With little clouds all fluffy white.
And every time the breeze would blow
The daisies rippled in a row.

I gathered all that I could pull,
Until my pinafore was full;
But still it stood up white and wide,
The daisy-field on every side!

Margaret Widdemer

THE DAISIES

You very fine Miss Molly,
  What will the daisies say,
If you carry home so many
  Of their little friends to-day?

Perhaps you take a sister,
  Perhaps you take a brother,
Or two little daisies who
  Were fond of one another.

Kate Greenaway

GROWING IN THE VALE

Growing in the vale
  By the uplands hilly,
Growing straight and frail,
  Lady Daffadowndilly.

In a golden crown,
And a scant green gown
  While the spring blows chilly,
Lady Daffadown,
  Sweet Daffadowndilly.

Christina G. Rossetti

SUSAN BLUE

Oh, Susan Blue,
How do you do?
Please may I go for a walk with you?
Where shall we go?
Oh, I know—
Down in the meadow where the cowslips grow!

Kate Greenaway

IRIS FLOWERS

My mother let me go with her,
(I had been good all day,)
To see the iris flowers that bloom
In gardens far away.

We walked and walked through hedges green,
Through rice-fields empty still,
To where we saw a garden gate
Beneath the farthest hill.

She pointed out the rows of "flowers";—
I saw no planted things,
But white and purple butterflies
Tied down with silken strings.

They strained and fluttered in the breeze,
So eager to be free;
I begged the man to let them go,
But mother laughed at me.

She said that they could never rise,
Like birds, to heaven so blue,
But even mothers do not know
Some things that children do.

That night the flowers untied themselves
And softly stole away,
To fly in sunshine round my dreams
Until the break of day.

Mary Fenollosa

A WREATH FOR PERSEPHONE

Weaving soft garlands
The meadows she roved.
These are the flowers
Persephone loved.

Almond and asphodel,
Violets blue,
Myrtle and marjoram,
Roses and rue,
Lilies and lotus buds,
Parsley and thyme,
Amaranth, cowslips,
And flowering lime.

Dreaming of summer
Dark meadows she roved.
These are the flowers
Persephone loved.

Marie Emilie Gilchrist

SUN, MOON AND STARS

MERRY SUNSHINE

"Good-morning, Merry Sunshine,
How did you wake so soon,
You've scared the little stars away
And shined away the moon.
I saw you go to sleep last night
Before I ceased my playing;
How did you get 'way over there?
And where have you been staying?"

"I never go to sleep, dear child,
I just go round to see
My little children of the east,
Who rise and watch for me.
I waken all the birds and bees
And flowers on my way;
And now come back to see the child
Who stayed out late at play."

Anonymous

SILVER

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.

Walter De la Mare

THE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world, so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark!
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Ann and Jane Taylor

THE NEW MOON

Dear Mother, how pretty the moon looks to-night!
  She was never so lovely before;
Her two little horns are so sharp and so bright,
  I hope she'll not grow any more.

If I were up there with you and my friends,
  I'd rock in it nicely, you'd see,
I'd sit in the middle and hold on both ends;
  Oh, what a bright cradle 'twould be!

I would call to the stars to keep out of the way,
  Lest we should rock over their toes;
And there I would rock till the dawn of the day,
  And see where the pretty moon goes.

And there we would stay in the beautiful skies,
  And through the bright clouds we would roam;
We would see the sun set, and see the sun rise,
  And on the next rainbow come home.

Eliza Lee C. Follen

LADY MOON

"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?"
  "Over the sea."
"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?"
  "All that love me."

"Are you not tired with rolling, and never
  Resting to sleep?
Why look so pale and so sad, as forever
  Wishing to weep?"

"Ask me not this, little child, if you love me;
  You are too bold;
I must obey my dear Father above me,
  And do as I'm told."

"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, where are you roving?"
  "Over the sea."
"Lady Moon, Lady Moon, whom are you loving?"
  "All that love me."

Lord Houghton

MOCKERY

Happened that the moon was up before I went to bed,
Poking through the bramble trees her round, gold head.
I didn't stop for stocking,
I didn't stop for shoe,
But went running out to meet her—oh, the night was blue!

Barefoot down the hill road, dust beneath my toes;
Barefoot in the pasture smelling sweet of fern and rose!
Oh, night was running with me,
Tame folk were all in bed . . .
And the moon was just showing her wild gold head.

But before I reached the hilltop where the bramble-trees
are tall,
I looked to see my lady moon—she wasn't there at all! . . .
Not sitting on the hilltop,
Nor slipping through the air,
Nor hanging in the brambles by her bright gold hair!

I walked slowly down the pasture and slowly up the hill,
Wondering and wondering, and very, very still,
I wouldn't look behind me,
I went at once to bed. . . .
And poking through the window was her bold gold head!

Katherine Dixon Riggs

Mockery

DAISIES

At evening when I go to bed
I see the stars shine overhead;
They are the little daisies white
That dot the meadow of the Night.

And often while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the Moon will go;
It is a lady, sweet and fair,
Who comes to gather daisies there.

For, when at morning I arise,
There's not a star left in the skies;
She's picked them all and dropped them down
Into the meadows of the town.

Frank Dempster Sherman

ON THE FARM

MINNIE, MATTIE AND MAY

Minnie and Mattie
  And fat little May,
Out in the country,
  Spending a day.

Such a bright day,
  With the sun glowing,
And the trees half in leaf,
  And the grass growing.

Pinky white pigling
  Squeals through his snout,
Woolly white lambkin
  Frisks all about.

Cluck! cluck! the nursing hen
  Summons her folk,—
Ducklings all downy soft,
  Yellow as yolk.

Cluck! cluck! the mother hen
  Summons her chickens
To peck the dainty bits
  Found in her pickings.

Minnie and Mattie
  And May carry posies,
Half of sweet violets,
  Half of primroses.

Give the sun time enough,
  Glowing and glowing,
He'll rouse the roses
  And bring them blowing.

Don't wait for roses,
  Losing to-day,
O Minnie, Mattie,
  And wise little May.

Violets and primroses
  Blossom to-day
For Minnie and Mattie
  And fat little May.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE CHICKENS

Said the first little chicken,
With a queer little squirm,
"I wish I could find
A fat little worm!"

Said the next little chicken,
With an odd little shrug:
"I wish I could find
A fat little bug!"

Said the third little chicken,
With a small sigh of grief:
"I wish I could find
A green little leaf!"

Said the fourth little chicken,
With a faint little moan:
"I wish I could find
A wee gravel stone!"

"Now see here!" said the mother,
From the green garden patch,
"If you want any breakfast,
Just come here and scratch!"

Anonymous

THE CALL

Come, calf, now to mother,
Come, lamb, that I choose,
Come, cats, one and t'other,
With snowy-white shoes,
Come, gosling all yellow,
Come forth with your fellow,
Come, chickens so small,
Scarce walking at all,
Come, doves, that are mine now,
With feathers so fine now!
The grass is bedewed,
The sunlight renewed,
It's early, early, summer's advancing
But autumn soon comes a-dancing!

Björnsterne Björnson

WHO LIKES THE RAIN?

"I," said the duck, "I call it fun,
For I have my little red rubbers on.
They make a cunning three-toed track
In the soft cool mud. Quack! Quack!"

"I," cried the dandelion, "I.
My roots are thirsty, my buds are dry."
And she lifted her little yellow head
Out of her green and grassy bed.

"I hope 'twill pour! I hope 'twill pour!"
Croaked the tree toad at his gray bark door.
"For with a broad leaf for a roof
I am perfectly weather-proof."

Sang the brook, "I welcome every drop;
Come, come, dear rain drops, never stop
Till a great river you make of me,
Then I will carry you to the sea."

Clara Doty Bates

THE COW

The friendly cow all red and white
  I love with all my heart;
She gives me cream with all her might,
  To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
  And yet she cannot stray,
All in pleasant open air,
  The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass,
  And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
  And eats the meadow flowers.

Robert Louis Stevenson

ON THE GRASSY BANKS

On the grassy banks
Lambkins at their pranks;
Woolly sisters, woolly brothers,
  Jumping off their feet;
While their woolly mothers
  Watch by them and bleat.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may) :
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

Robert Frost

WHEN THE COWS COME HOME

When the cows come home the milk is coming,
Honey's made while the bees are humming;
Duck and drake on the rushy lake,
And the deer live safe in the breezy brake;
And timid, funny, brisk little bunny,
Winks his nose and sits all sunny.

Christina G. Rossetti

THE COW

Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
Every day and every night,
Warm, and fresh, and sweet, and white.

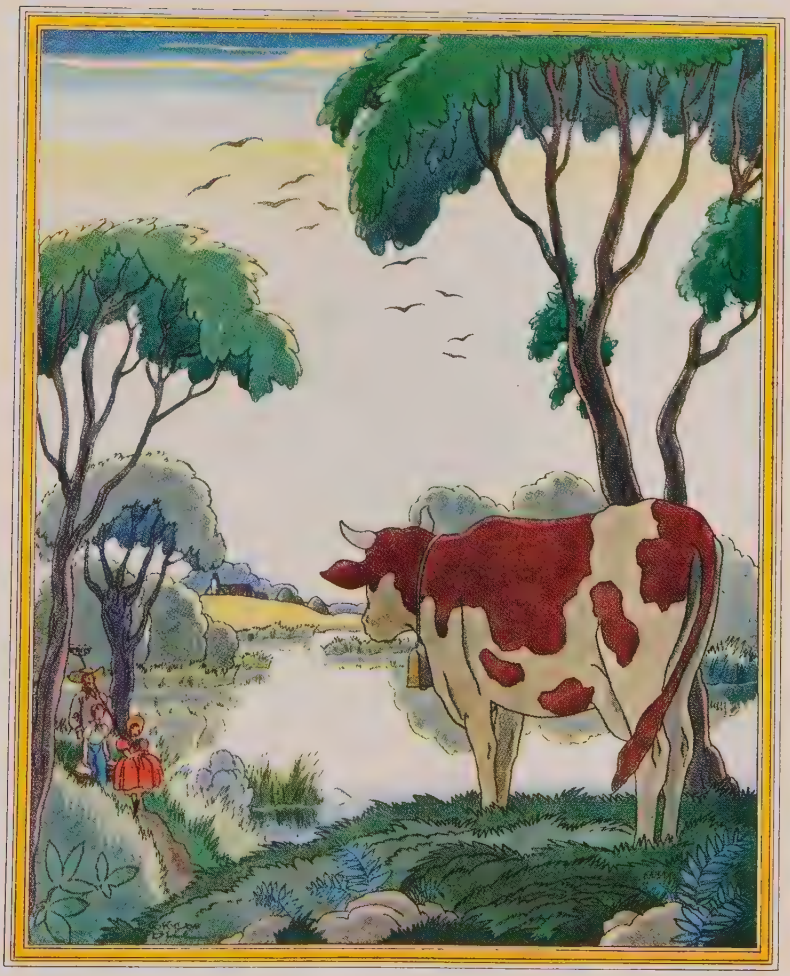
Do not chew the hemlock rank,
Growing on the weedy bank;
But the yellow cowslips eat,
They will make it very sweet.

Where the purple violet grows,
Where the bubbling water flows,
Where the grass is fresh and fine,
Pretty cow, go there and dine.

Ann Taylor

THE SHEEP

Lazy sheep, pray tell me why
In the pleasant field you lie,
Eating grass and daisies white
From the morning till the night?
Everything can something do;
But what kind of use are you?



The Cow

Nay, my little master, nay,
Do not serve me so, I pray.
Don't you see the wool that grows
On my back to make you clothes?
Cold, and very cold, you'd get,
If I did not give you it.

True, it seems a pleasant thing
To nip the daisies in the spring;
But many chilly nights I pass
On the cold and dewy grass,
Or pick a scanty dinner, where
All the common's brown and bare.

Then the farmer comes at last,
When the merry spring is past,
Cuts my woolly coat away,
To warm you in the winter's day:
Little master, this is why
In the pleasant fields I lie.

Ann Taylor

THE EGG

Oh! how shall I get it, how shall I get it?—
A nice little new-laid egg;
My grandmamma told me to run to the barn-yard
And see if just one I could beg.

"Mooly-cow, Mooly-cow, down in the meadow,
Have you any eggs, I pray?"
The Mooly-cow stares as if I were crazy,
And solemnly stalks away.

"Oh! Doggie, Doggie, perhaps you may have it,
That nice little egg for me."
But Doggie just wags his tail and capers,
And never an egg has he.

"Now, Dobbin, Dobbin, I'm sure you must have one,
Hid down in the manger here."
But Dobbin lays back his ears and whinnies,
With "Come and look, if you dare!"

"Piggywig, Piggywig, grunting and squealing,
Are you crying 'Fresh eggs for sale'?"
No! Piggy, you're very cold and unfeeling,
With that impudent quirk in your tail.

"You wise old Gobbler, you look so knowing,
I'm sure you can find me an egg.
You stupid old thing! just to say Gobble-gobble,
And balance yourself on one leg."

Oh! how shall I get it, how shall I get it,—
That little white egg so small?
I've asked every animal here in the barnyard
And they won't give me any at all.

But after I'd hunted until I was tired,
I found . . . not one egg, but ten!
And you never could guess where they all were hid—
Right under our old speckled hen!

Laura E. Richards

THE WONDERFUL MEADOW

Over in the meadow, in the sand, in the sun,
Lived an old Mother-Toad and her little toady one.
"Leap," said the mamma, "I'll leap," said the one,
And she leaped with her mamma in the sand, in the sun.

Over in the meadow, where the water runs blue,
Lived an old Mother-Fish and her little fishes two.
"Swim," said the mamma; "We'll swim," said the two,
And they swam and they danced in the water so blue.

Over in the meadow in the old apple-tree,
Lived a Mother-Bluebird and her little birdies three,
"Sing," said the mamma, "We'll sing," said the three,
And they sang their sweet songs in the old apple-tree.

Over in the meadow, in the reeds on the shore
Lived a Mother-Muskrat and her little ratties four.
"Dive," said the mamma; "We'll dive," said the four.
And they dove every day, 'mid the reeds on the shore.

Over in the meadow, in their snug little hive,
Lived a Mother-Honeybee, and the little bees were five.
"Buzz," said the mamma, "We'll buzz," said the five.
And they buzzed and made honey in their busy little hive.

Over in the meadow, in a nest built of sticks,
Lived a black Mother-Crow and her little blackies six.
"Caw," said the mamma; "We'll caw," said the six,
And they cawed and they cawed in their nest built of sticks.

Over in the meadow, in the calm summer even,
Lived a Mother-Firefly, and her little flies were seven,
"Shine," said the mamma, "We'll shine," said the seven,
And they shone like the stars, in the calm summer even.

Over in the meadow, on an old mossy gate,
Lived a Mother-Lizard, and her little lizards eight,
"Bask," said the mamma; "We'll bask," said the eight,
And they basked in the sun on the old mossy gate.

Over in the meadow, where the clear waters shine,
Lived a Mother-Bullfrog, and her little froggies nine,
"Croak," said the mamma, "We'll croak," said the nine,
And they croaked every night where the clear waters shine.

Over in the meadow, in her sly little den,
Lived a Mother-Spider, and her little spiders ten.
"Spin," said the mamma; "We'll spin," said the ten,
And they spun their lace webs in their little sly den.

Over in the meadow where the grass is soft and even,
Lived a Mother-Cricket and her little ones eleven,
"Chirp," said the mamma; "We'll chirp," said the eleven,
And they chirped and they chirped where the grass is soft
and even.

Over in the meadow where the men dig and delve,
Lived an old Mother-Ant and her little anties twelve,
"Toil," said the mamma; "We'll toil," said the twelve,
And they toiled every day where the men dig and delve.

Olive A. Wadsworth

LAUGHING SONGS

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat;
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O, lovely Pussy! O, Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!
  How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh! let us be married; too long we have tarried:
  But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
  To the land where the bong-tree grows;
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
  With a ring at the end of his nose,
    His nose,
    His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
  Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
  By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince and slices of quince,
  Which they ate with a runcible spoon,
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
  They danced by the light of the moon,
    The moon,
    The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

Edward Lear

A CHINESE NURSERY RHYME

He ran up the candlestick,
The little mousy brown,
To steal and eat tallow,
And he couldn't get down.
He called for his grandma
But his grandma was in town;
So he doubled up into a wheel
And rolled himself down.

Translated by Isaac T. Headland

THE BROOM, the SHOVEL, the POKER, and the TONGS

The Broom and the Shovel, the Poker, and Tongs,
They all took a drive in the Park;
And they each sang a song, ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
Before they went back in the dark.
Mr. Poker he sate quite upright in the coach;
Mr. Tongs made a clatter and clash;
Miss Shovel was dressed all in black (with a Brooch)
Mrs. Broom was in blue (with a sash).
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
And they all sang a song.
"O Shovely so lovely!" the Poker he sang,
"You have perfectly conquered my heart.
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong! If you're pleased with my song,
I will feed you with cold apple-tart.

"When you scrape up the coals with a delicate sound,
You enrapture my life with delight,
Your nose is so shiny, your head is so round,
And your shape is so slender and bright!
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
Ain't you pleased with my song?"

"Alas! Mrs. Broom," sighed the Tongs in his song,
"Oh! is it because I'm so thin,
And my legs are so long, ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!—
That you don't care about me a pin?
Ah! fairest of creatures, when sweeping the room,
Ah! why don't you heed my complaint?
Must you needs be so cruel, you beautiful Broom,
Because you are covered with paint?
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
You are certainly wrong."

Mrs. Broom and Miss Shovel together they sang,
"What nonsense you're singing to-day!
Said the Shovel, "I'll certainly hit you a bang!"
Said the Broom, "And I'll sweep you away!"
So the coachman drove homeward as fast as he could
Perceiving their anger with pain;
But they put on the kettle, and little by little
They all became happy again.
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
There's an end of my song.

Edward Lear

THE ELEPHANT

When people call this beast to mind,
  They marvel more and more
At such a little tail behind,
  So large a trunk before.

Hilaire Belloc

THE DUEL

The gingham dog and the calico cat
Side by side on the table sat;
'Twas half-past twelve, and (what do you think!)
Nor one nor t' other had slept a wink!
  The old Dutch clock and the Chinese plate

Appeared to know as sure as fate
There was going to be a terrible spat.
(I wasn't there; I simply state
What was told to me by the Chinese plate!)

The gingham dog went "Bow-wow-wow!"
And the calico cat replied "Mee-ow!"
The air was littered, an hour or so,
With bits of gingham and calico,
While the old Dutch clock in the chimney-place
Up with its hands before its face,
For it always dreaded a family row!
(Now mind: I'm only telling you
What the old Dutch clock declares is true!)

The Chinese plate looked very blue,
And wailed, "Oh, dear! what shall we do!"
But the gingham dog and the calico cat
Wallowed this way and tumbled that,
Employing every tooth and claw
In the awfullest way you ever saw—
And, oh! how the gingham and calico flew!
(Don't fancy I exaggerate—
I got my news from the Chinese plate!)

Next morning, where the two had sat
They found no trace of dog or cat;
And some folks think unto this day
That burglars stole that pair away!
But the truth about the cat and pup
Is this: they ate each other up!
Now what do you really think of that!
(*The old Dutch clock it told me so,*
And that is how I came to know.)

Eugene Field

JUST AS HE FEARED

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!—
Two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren
Have all built their nests in my beard."

Edward Lear

THE LION

The Lion, the Lion, he dwells in the waste,
He has a big head and a very small waist;
But his shoulders are stark, and his jaws they are grim,
And a good little child will not play with him.

Hilaire Belloc

THE LOBSTER QUADRILLE

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle,—will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far! Too far!" and gave a look askance,—
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance,
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied,
"There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to France;

Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

Lewis Carroll

THE MELANCHOLY PIG

There was a Pig, that sat alone,
Beside a ruined Pump.
By day and night he made his moan:
It would have stirred a heart of stone
To see him wring his hoofs and groan,
Because he could not jump.

Lewis Carroll

The Elf and the Dormouse

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain, to shelter himself.

Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf, frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.

To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee smile,

Tugged till the toadstool toppled in two,
Holding it over him, gayly he flew.

Soon he was safe home, dry as could be,
Soon woke the Dormouse—"Good gracious me!

Where is my toadstool?" loud he lamented.
And that's how umbrellas first were invented.

Oliver Herford

JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
  Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
  And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
  The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
  The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
  Long time the manxome foe he sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
  And stood awhile in thought.

And as in uffish thought he stood,
  The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
  And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
  The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
  He went galumphing back.

CORYDON
BELL

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll

THE LITTLE ELFMAN

I met a little Elfman once,
Down where the lilies blow.
I asked him why he was so small,
And why he didn't grow.

He slightly frowned, and with his eye
He looked me through and through—
"I'm just as big for me," said he,
"As you are big for you!"

John Kendrick Bangs

THE MYSTERIOUS CAT

I saw a proud, mysterious cat,
I saw a proud, mysterious cat
Too proud to catch a mouse or rat—
Mew, mew, mew.

But catnip she would eat, and purr,
But catnip she would eat, and purr,
And goldfish she did much prefer—
Mew, mew, mew.

I saw a cat—'twas but a dream,
I saw a cat—'twas but a dream
Who scorned the slave that brought her cream—
Mew, mew, mew.

Unless the slave were dressed in style,
Unless the slave were dressed in style
And knelt before her all the while—
Mew, mew, mew.

Did you ever hear of a thing like that?
Did you ever hear of a thing like that?
Did you ever hear of a thing like that?
Oh, what a proud mysterious cat.
Oh, what a proud mysterious cat.
Oh, what a proud mysterious cat.
Mew. . . . mew. . . . mew.

Vachel Lindsay

THE MILK JUG

(The Kitten Speaks)

The Gentle Milk Jug blue and white
  I love with all my soul;
She pours herself with all her might
  To fill my breakfast bowl.

All day she sits upon the shelf,
  She does not jump or climb—
She only waits to pour herself
  When 'tis my supper-time.

And when the Jug is empty quite,
  I shall not mew in vain,
The Friendly Cow all red and white,
  Will fill her up again.

Oliver Herford

MISS T.

It's a very odd thing—
  As odd as can be—
That whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T.;
Porridge and apples,
  Mince, muffins and mutton,
Jam, junket, jumbles—
  Not a rap, not a button

It matters; the moment
  They're out of her plate,
Though shared by Miss Butcher
  And sour Mr. Bate;
Tiny and cheerful,
  And as neat as can be,
Whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T.

Walter De la Mare

THE NUTCRACKERS and the SUGAR-TONGS

The Nutcrackers sate by a plate on the table;
  The Sugar-Tongs sate by a plate at his side;
And the Nutcrackers said, "Don't you wish we were able
  Along the blue hills and green meadows to ride?
Must we drag on this stupid existence forever
  So idle and weary, so full of remorse,
While every one else takes his pleasure, and never
  Seems happy unless he is riding a horse?

"Don't you think we could ride without being instructed,
  Without any saddle or bridle or spur?
Our legs are so long, and so aptly constructed,
  I'm sure that an accident could not occur.
Let us all of a sudden hop down from the table,
  And hustle downstairs, and each jump on a horse!

Shall we try? Shall we go? Do you think we are able?"
The Sugar-tongs answered distinctly, "Of course!"

So down the long staircase they hopped in a minute;
The Sugar-tongs snapped, and the Crackers said, "Crack!"
The stable was open; the horses were in it;
Each took out a pony, and jumped on his back,
The Cat, in a fright, scrambled out of the doorway;
The Mice tumbled out of a bundle of hay;
The brown and white Rats and the black ones from Norway
Screamed out, "They are taking the horses away!"

The whole of the household was filled with amazement;
The Cups and the Saucers danced madly about;
The Plates and the Dishes looked out of the casement;
The Salt-cellar stood on his head with a shout;
The Spoons, with a clatter, looked out of the lattice;
The Mustard-Pot climbed up the gooseberry-pies;
The Soup-ladle peeped through a heap of veal-patties,
And squeaked with a ladle-like scream of surprise.

The Frying-Pan said, "It's an awful delusion!"
The Tea-Kettle hissed, and grew black in the face;
And they all rushed downstairs in the wildest confusion
To see the great Nutcracker-Sugar-tong race.
And out of the stable, with screamings and laughter
(Their ponies were cream-colored, speckled with brown)
The Nutcrackers first, and the Sugar-tongs after,
Rode all round the yard, and then all around the town.

They rode through the street, and they rode by the station;
  They galloped away to the beautiful shore;
In silence they rode, and "made no observation,"
  Save this, "We will never go back any more!"
And still you might hear, till they rode out of hearing,
  The Sugar-tongs snap, and the Crackers say, "Crack!"
Till far in the distance their forms disappearing,
  They faded away; and they never came back!

Edward Lear

THE VULTURE

The Vulture eats between his meals,
  And that's the reason why
He very, very rarely feels
  As well as you or I.
His eye is dull, his head is bald,
  His neck is growing thinner.
Oh, what a lesson for us all
  To only eat at dinner!

Hilaire Belloc

THE TABLE AND THE CHAIR

Said the Table to the Chair,
"You can hardly be aware
How I suffer from the heat
And from chilblains on my feet.
If we took a little walk,
We might have a little talk;
Pray let us take the air,"
Said the Table to the Chair.

Said the Chair unto the Table,
"Now, you *know* we are not able:
How foolishly you talk,
When you know we *cannot* walk!"
Said the Table with a sigh,
"It can do no harm to try:
I've as many legs as you:
Why can't we walk on two?"

So they both went slowly down,
And walked about the town
With a cheerful bumpy sound
As they toddled round and round;
And everybody cried,
As they hastened to their side,
"See, the Table and the Chair
Have come out to take the air!"

But in going down an alley,
To a castle in a valley,
They completely lost their way,
And wandered all the day;
Till, to see them safely back,
They paid a Ducky-quack,
And a Beetle, and a Mouse,
Who took them to their house.

Then they whispered to each other,
"O delightful little brother,
What a lovely walk we've taken!
Let us dine on beans and bacon."
So the Ducky and the leetle
Browny-Mousy and the Beetle
Dined, and danced upon their heads
Till they toddled to their beds.

Edward Lear

THE FAIRIES' CALL

PUCK'S SONG

Over hill, over dale,
  Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
  Thorough flood, thorough fire,
  I do wander every where.
  Swifter than the moonè's sphere,
  And I serve the fairy queen,
  To dew her orbs upon the green.
  The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
  In their gold coats spots you see;
  Those be rubies, fairy favours,
  In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

William Shakespeare

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;

CORYDON
BELL

Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
  Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
  From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
  On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
  Of the gay Northern Lights.

. . . . . .

By the craggy hillside,
  Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees,
  For pleasure here and there.
If any man so daring
  As dig them up in spite,
He shall find the sharpest thorns
  In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

William Allingham

THE FAIRY FOLK

Come cuddle close in daddy's coat
  Beside the fire so bright,
And hear about the fairy folk
  That wander in the night.
For when the stars are shining clear
  And all the world is still,

They float across the silver moon
From hill to cloudy hill.

Their caps of green, their cloaks of green,
Are hung with silver bells,
And when they're shaken with the wind
Their merry ringing swells.
And riding on the crimson moth,
With black spots on his wings,
They guide them down the purple sky
With golden bridle rings.

They love to visit girls and boys
To see how sweet they sleep,
To stand beside their cosy cots
And at their faces peep.
For in the whole of fairyland
They have no finer sight
Than little children sleeping sound
With faces rosy bright.

On tiptoe crowding round their heads,
When bright the moonlight beams,
They whisper little tender words
That fill their minds with dreams;
And when they see a sunny smile,
With lightest finger tips
They lay a hundred kisses sweet
Upon the ruddy lips.

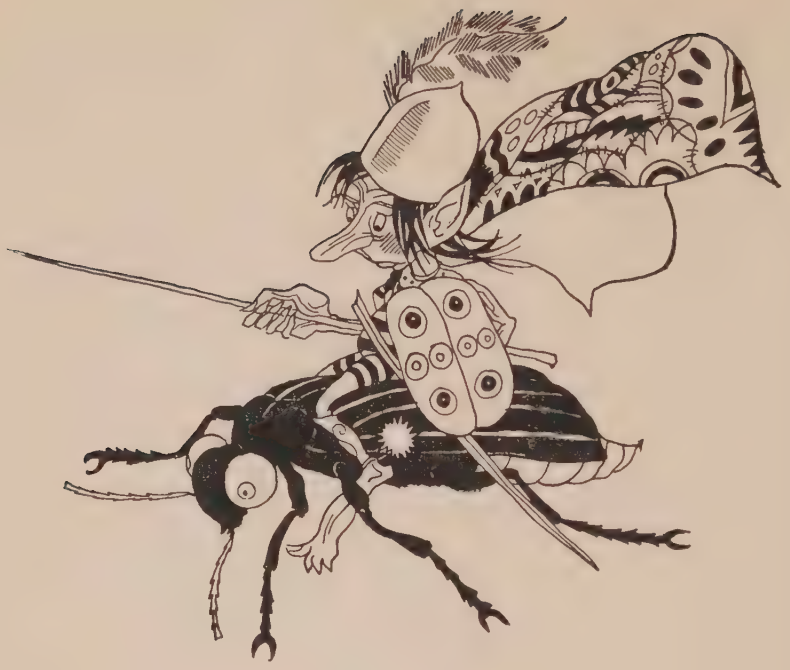
And then the little spotted moths
  Spread out their crimson wings,
And bear away the fairy crowd
  With shaking bridle rings.
Come, bairnies, hide in daddy's coat,
  Beside the fire so bright—
Perhaps the little fairy folk
  Will visit you to-night.

Robert Montgomery Bird

ARIEL'S SONG

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry;
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily,
Merrily, merrily shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

William Shakespeare



A FAIRY IN ARMOR

He put his acorn helmet on;
It was plumed of the silk of the thistle-down;
The corselet plate that guarded his breast
Was once the wild bee's golden vest;
His cloak, of a thousand mingled dyes,
Was formed of the wings of butterflies;
His shield was the shell of a lady-bug queen,
Studs of gold on a ground of green;

And the quivering lance which he brandished bright
Was the sting of a wasp he had slain in fight.
Swift he bestrode his firefly steed;
He bared his blade of the bent-grass blue;
He drove his spurs of the cockle-seed,
And away like a glance of thought he flew
To skim the heavens, and follow far
The fiery trail of the rocket-star.

Joseph Rodman Drake

QUEEN MAB

A little fairy comes at night;
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed,
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things—
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish;

Of arbors filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade,
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade;

And talking birds with gifted tongues
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

. . . . . .

Thomas Hood

HALF–ASLEEP

I heard a fairy tapping at my window,
I saw an elfman rapping on the sill;
I asked the elfman, "What is it you wish?"
I set out for the fairy curds in a dish.

She ate them daintily from out of the bowl;
The elfman winked his eye, and that was all.
How could I see him wink or fairy fed
When I was far across the room in bed?

Thelma Harrington Bell

SOME ONE

Some one came knocking
  At my wee, small door;
Some one came knocking,
  I'm sure—sure—sure;
I listened, I opened,
  I looked to left and right,
But nought there was a-stirring
  In the still dark night;
Only the busy beetle
  Tap-tapping in the wall,

Only from the forest
The screech-owl's call,
Only the cricket whistling
While the dewdrops fall,
So I know not who came knocking,
At all, at all, at all.

Walter De la Mare

TREES AND FAIRIES

The larch-tree gives them needles
To stitch their gossamer things;
Carefully, cunningly toils the oak
To shape the cups of the fairy folk;
The sycamore gives them wings.

The lordly fir-tree rocks them
High on his swinging sails;
The hawthorn fashions their tiny spears;
The whispering alder charms their ears
With soft, mysterious tales.

The chestnut gives them candles
To make their ballroom fine;
And the elder-bush and the hazel tree
Assist their delicate revelry
With nuts and fragrant wine.

Rose Fyleman

VERY NEARLY

I never quite saw fairy-folk
  A-dancing in the glade,
Where, just beyond the hollow oak,
  Their broad green rings are laid;
But, while behind that oak I hid,
One day I very nearly did!

I never quite saw mermaids rise
  Above the twilight sea,
When sands, left wet, 'neath sunset skies,
  Are blushing rosily:
But—all alone, those rocks amid—
One day I very nearly did!

I never quite saw Goblin Grim,
  Who haunts our lumber room
And pops his head above the rim
  Of that oak chest's deep gloom:
But once—when Mother raised the lid—
I very, very nearly did!

Queenie Scott-Hopper

ADVENTURE

Black wave the trees in the forest
And a rough wind hurries by,
But the swineherd's toddling daughter
Knows where fallen pinecones lie.

And girt with a snowy apron
She scampers, alert and gay,
To the hidden pool in the hollow
Where the wan witch people play.

They smile, the wee wrinkled women,
  They creep to her pinafore;
And lay in her lap strange treasures
  Trolls brought from the ocean's floor.

And they marvel at her blonde tresses,
  And braid them with scented fern,
And they lave her dusty, brown ankles
  With snow water from the burn.

But nobody listens, or heeds them,
  The swineherd hews a new trail,
The swineherd's wife in the cottage
  Pours sour milk from the pail.

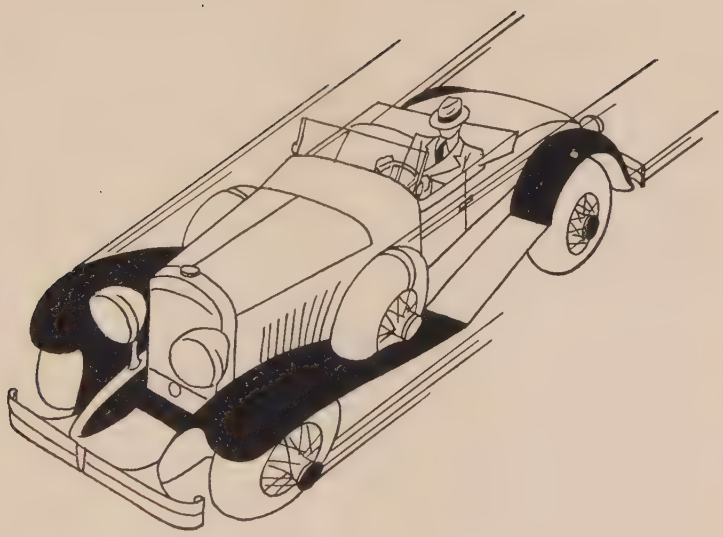
And little Gerta lags homeward
  Dream shod through the shadows deep;
Her eyelids heavy with wonder—
  They whisper, "She's been asleep."

Laura Benét

THE SHADOW PEOPLE

Old lame Bridget doesn't hear
Fairy music in the grass
When the gloaming's on the mere
And the shadow people pass:
Never hears their slow grey feet
Coming from the village street
Just beyond the parson's wall,
Where the clover globes are sweet
And the mushroom's parasol
Opens in the moonlit rain.
Every night I hear them call
From their long and merry train.
Old lame Bridget says to me,
"It is just your fancy, child."
She cannot believe I see
Laughing faces in the wild,
Hands that twinkle in the sedge
Bowing at the water's edge
Where the finny minnows quiver,
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge
Bubble foam to sail the river.
And the sunny hands to me
Beckon ever, beckon ever.
Oh! I would be wild and free
And with the shadow people be.

Francis Ledwidge



DIFFERENCES

Daddy goes a-riding in a motor painted grey
He makes a lot of snorty noise before he gets away;
The fairies go a-riding when they wish to take their ease,
The fairies go a-riding on the backs of bumblebees.

Daddy goes a-sailing in a jolly wooden boat,
He takes a lot of tackle and his very oldest coat;
The fairies go a-sailing, and I wonder they get home,
The fairies go a-sailing on a little scrap of foam.

Daddy goes a-climbing with a knapsack and a stick,
The rocks are very hard and steep, his boots are very thick;
But the fairies go a-climbing (I've seen them there in crowds),
The fairies go a-climbing on the mountains in the clouds.

Rose Fyleman

CHRISTMAS

SONG

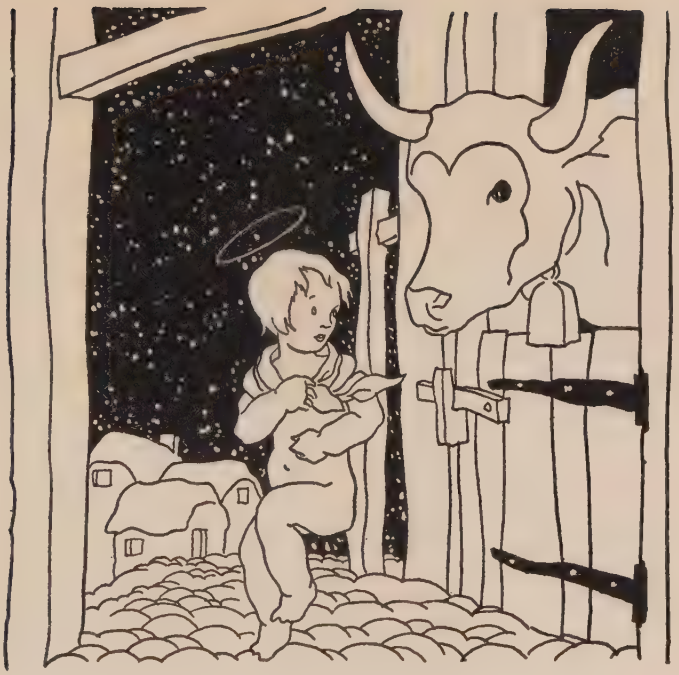
Why do the bells of Christmas ring?
Why do little children sing?

Once a lovely shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light
Made a manger's cradle bright.

There a darling baby lay
Pillowed soft upon the hay;
And its mother sang and smiled:
"This is Christ, the holy Child!"

Therefore bells for Christmas ring,
Therefore little children sing.

Eugene Field



A CHRISTMAS FOLK-SONG

The little Jesus came to town;
The wind blew up, the wind blew down;
Out in the street the wind was bold;
Now who would house Him from the cold?

Then opened wide a stable door,
Fair were the rushes on the floor;
The Ox put forth a hornèd head:
"Come, Little Lord, here make Thy bed."

Uprose the Sheep were folded near:
"Thou Lamb of God, come, enter here."
He entered there to rush and reed,
Who was the Lamb of God indeed.

The little Jesus came to town;
With ox and sheep He laid Him down;
Peace to the byre, peace to the fold,
For that they housed Him from the cold!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

CRADLE HYMN

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Martin Luther

CHRISTMAS CAROL OF PROVENCE

Bring a torch, Jeannette, Isabella!
Bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village;
Christ is born, and Mary's calling;
Ah! Ah! beautiful is the mother;
Ah! Ah! beautiful is her son.

It is wrong when the Child is sleeping,
It is wrong to talk so loud;
Silence, all, as you gather around,
Lest your noise should waken Jesus:
Hush! Hush! see how fast He slumbers;
Hush! Hush! see how fast He sleeps.

Who goes there a-knocking so loudly?
Who goes there a-knocking like that?
Ope your doors, I have here on a plate
Some very good cakes which I am bringing:
Toc! Toc! quickly your doors now open;
Toc! Toc! come let us make good cheer.

Softly to the little stable,
Softly for a moment come;
Look and see how charming is Jesus,
How He is white, His cheeks are rosy.
Hush! Hush! see how the Child is sleeping;
Hush! Hush! see how He smiles in dreams.

Nicholas Saboly

LONG, LONG AGO

Winds thro' the olive trees
  Softly did blow,
Round little Bethlehem
  Long, long ago.

Sheep on the hillside lay
  Whiter than snow;
Shepherds were watching them,
  Long, long ago.

Then from the happy sky,
  Angels bent low,
Singing their songs of joy,
  Long, long ago.

For in a manger bed,
  Cradled we know,
Christ came to Bethlehem,
  Long, long ago.

Anonymous

A CATCH BY THE HEARTH

Sing we all merrily
  Christmas is here,
The day that we love best
  Of days in the year.

Bring forth the holly,
  The box, and the bay,
Deck out our cottage
  For glad Christmas-day.

Sing we all merrily,
  Draw around the fire,
Sister and brother,
  Grandsire and sire.

Anonymous

A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below;
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted, and called them by name:
"Now, Dasher, now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall!
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys,—and St. Nicholas too.
And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.
He was chubby and plump,—a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

Clement Clarke Moore

BY THE FIRESIDE

BABY MINE

Baby mine, over the trees
  Baby mine, over the flowers;
Baby mine, over the sunshine;
  Baby mine, over the showers.

Baby mine, over the land;
  Baby mine, over the water.
Oh, when had a mother before
  Such a sweet—such a sweet, little daughter!

Kate Greenaway

THE BABY'S DANCE

Dance, little baby, dance up high;
Never mind, baby, mother is by;
Crow and caper, caper and crow,
There, little baby, there you go;
Up to the ceiling, down to the ground,
Backward and forwards, round and round:
Then dance, little baby, and mother shall sing,
With the merry gay carol, ding, ding-a-ding, ding.

Jane Taylor

THE BABY

Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into the here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
Something better than any one knows.

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

Where did you get that pearly ear?
God spoke, and it came out to hear.

Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into hooks and bands.

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherubs' wings.

How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me, and so I grew.

But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought of you, and so I am here.

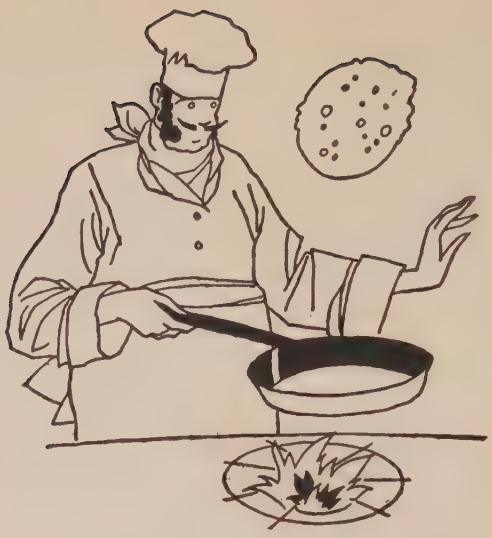
George Macdonald

THE BABY'S BATH

Come see the baby in her bath,
Hear her coo and crow and laugh.
Ah, she loves it soft and warm

Creeping up her little form;
Every day she loves it more,
Loves to splash it on the floor;
Then her little hands dive deep
To her cunning little feet;
Catching at the wee, wee toes
Standing close in two pink rows;
Fast she holds the bathtub sides,
Back and forth she gaily glides,
Till down her little head goes,
And up come her wee, pink toes;
But she doesn't shed a tear,
For our baby has no fear,
Only looks a bit surprised,
As she rubs her drowned eyes,
Gurgling low with deep delight
At her unexpected plight;
She loves her bath, you'll all agree,
If you only come and see.

Sarah Jane S. Harrington



MIX A PANCAKE

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
  Pop it in the pan;
Fry the pancake,
Toss the pancake,—
  Catch it if you can.

Christina G. Rossetti

BARTHOLOMEW

Bartholomew
  Is very sweet,
From sandy hair
  To rosy feet.

Bartholomew
  Is six months old,
And dearer far
  Than pearls or gold.

Bartholomew
  Has deep blue eyes,
Round pieces dropped
  From out the skies.

Bartholomew
  Is hugged and kissed!
He loves a flower
  In either fist.

Bartholomew's
  My saucy son:
No mother has
  A sweeter one!

Norman Gale

I LOVE LITTLE PUSSY

I love little Pussy
  Her coat is so warm;
And if I don't hurt her,
  She'll do me no harm.

So I'll not pull her tail,
  Nor drive her away,
But Pussy and I
  Very gently will play.

She shall sit by my side,
  And I'll give her some food;
And she'll love me, because
  I am gentle and good.

. . . . . .

I never will vex her,
  Nor make her displeased,
For Puss doesn't like
  To be worried or teased.

Jane Taylor

THE LOOKING-GLASS PUSSY

(The Kitten Speaks)

Back behind the mirror is another pussy-cat
With bows and whiskers just like mine, and just as gray and fat.

She peeps around and looks at me when I peep in at her,
And looks as pleased as possible each time she hears me purr.

She pats her paws against the glass when I pat mine there too;
But she won't come and play with me, no matter how I mew!

One day I thought I'd catch her when I didn't see her there;
(She couldn't see me either—I was down behind a chair!)

I crept behind the furniture and slid along the wall
And ran behind the mirror—and she wasn't there at all!

But when I bounced around the frame as sudden as could be
That tricky little cat was there a-looking out at me!

Margaret Widdemer

TWO LITTLE TOADIES

Two little toadies went out for a walk, out for a walk,
And arm and arm they had a nice talk, had a nice talk.

When they were many miles from home,
Each sat down on a dusty stone, a dusty stone,

Till the stars came out and they felt afraid, felt afraid,
For they saw an old owl sitting in state
And then they knew it was getting late, getting late.

Then Specklety to his brother said,
"I've a fearful pain in my head,
I almost wish I were dead, I were dead."

Then each took turns to carry the other,
Specklety first and then his brother, then his brother.

And when they reached home, each one said,
"In a burdock leaf I will cool my head, cool my head."

Then each little toady tucked in his toes, tucked in his toes,
And lay 'neath the rushes till the moon rose, till the moon rose.

Then the lily-bells chimed in the pale moonlight,
And the birdies all whispered, "Good-night, Good-night,
Dear little toadies," they sang, "Good-night, Good-night".

Anonymous

THE CATS' TEA-PARTY

Five little pussy-cats, invited out to tea,
Cried: "Mother, let us go—Oh, do! for good we'll surely be.
We'll wear our bibs and hold our things as you have shown us how—
Spoons in right paws, cups in left—and make a pretty bow;
We'll always say 'Yes, if you please,' and 'Only half of that.' "
"Then go, my darling children," said the happy Mother Cat.
The five little pussy-cats went out that night to tea.
Their heads were smooth and glossy, their tails were swinging free;
They held their things as they had learned, and tried to be polite;—
With snowy bibs beneath their chins they were a pretty sight.
But, alas, for manners beautiful, and coats as soft as silk!
The moment that the little kits were asked to take some milk,
They dropped their spoons, forgot to bow, and—oh, what do you think?
They put their noses in the cups and all began to drink!
Yes, every naughty little kit set up a miou for more,
Then knocked the tea-cups over, and scampered through the door.

Frederick E. Weatherly

TWO LITTLE KITTENS

Two little kittens, one stormy night,
  Began to quarrel and then to fight;
One had a mouse, and the other had none,
  And that's the way the quarrel begun.

"I'll have that mouse," said the bigger cat.
  "You'll have that mouse? We'll see about that!"
"I will have that mouse," said the eldest son.
  "You shan't have that mouse," said the little one.

I told you before, 'twas a stormy night,
  When these two little kittens began to fight;
The old woman seized her sweeping broom,
  And swept the two kittens right out of the room.

The ground was covered with frost and snow,
  And the two little kittens had nowhere to go;
So they laid themselves down on the mat by the door,
  While the old woman finished sweeping the floor.

Then they crept in, as quiet as mice,
  All wet with snow, and as cold as ice;
For they found it was better, that stormy night,
  To lie down and sleep, than to quarrel and fight.

Anonymous

MR. NOBODY

I know a funny little man,
As quiet as a mouse,
Who does the mischief that is done
In everybody's house!
There's no one ever sees his face,
And yet we all agree
That every plate we break was cracked
By Mr. Nobody.

'Tis he who always tears our books,
Who leaves the door ajar,
He pulls the buttons from our shirts,
And scatters pins afar;
That squeaking door will always squeak,
For prithee, don't you see,
We leave the oiling to be done
By Mr. Nobody.

The finger marks upon the door
By none of us are made;
We never leave the blinds unclosed,
To let the curtains fade.
The ink we never spill; the boots
That lying round you see
Are not our boots;—they all belong
To Mr. Nobody.

Anonymous

MORAL SONG

Oh, so cool
In his deep green pool
Was a frog on a log one day!
He would blink his eyes
As he snapped at flies,
  For his mother was away,
  For his mother was away!

Now that naughty frog
Left his own home log
And started out to play.
He flipped and he flopped
And he never stopped
  Till he reached the great blue bay,
  Till he reached the great blue bay!

Alas, with a swish
Came a mighty fish,
And swallowed him where he lay.
Now it's things like this
That never miss
  Little frogs who don't obey,
  Little frogs who don't obey!

John Farrar

MY PETS

My little kitty has soft, white fur,
A pink little nose, and loves to purr,
And loves to sit on the window-sill
Where the sun shines warm, bright and still.

My little dog has a black-tipped nose,
That finds my kitty wherever she goes,
And loves to chase her, and just for fun,
For he loves to see my kitty run.

My little bird, how he loves to sing—
And loves to chirp and loves to swing,
He must be happy the whole day long
To sing such a happy, merry song.

My little sister, she coos and crows,
Shakes her rattle and plays with her toes.
Or pulls my hair in the wildest way
Then bites my finger, and all for play.

Sarah Jane S. Harrington

THE FAIRY BOOK

In summer, when the grass is thick, if mother has the time,
She shows me with her pencil how a poet makes a rhyme,
And often she is sweet enough to choose a leafy nook,
And I cuddle up so closely when she reads the Fairy-book.

In winter when the corn's asleep, and birds are not in song,
And crocuses and violets have been away too long,
Dear mother puts her thimble by in answer to my look,
And I cuddle up so closely when she reads the Fairy-book.

And mother tells the servants that of course they must contrive
To manage all the household things from four till half-past five,
For we really cannot suffer interruption from the cook,
When we cuddle close together with the happy Fairy-book.

Norman Gale

GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORNING

A fair little girl sat under a tree
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right;
And said, "Dear work, good-night, good-night!"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying, "Caw, caw!" on their way to bed;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things, good-night, good-night!"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed;
The sheep's "Bleat, bleat!" came over the road;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl, good-night, good-night!"

She did not say to the sun, "Good-night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light;
She knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall, pink foxglove bowed his head,
The violets curtsied, and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees, her favorite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day,
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good-morning, good-morning! our work is begun!"

Lord Houghton

LITTLE GUSTAVA

Little Gustava sits in the sun,
Safe in the porch, and the little drops run
From the icicles under the eaves so fast,
For the bright spring sun shines warm at last,
And glad is little Gustava.

She wears a quaint little scarlet cap,
And a little green bowl she holds in her lap,
Filled with bread and milk to the brim,
And a wreath of marigolds round the rim.
"Ha! ha!" laughs little Gustava.

Up comes her little gray, coaxing cat
With her little pink nose, and she mews, "What's that?"
Gustava feeds her,—she begs for more;
And a little brown hen walks in at the door;
"Good day!" cries little Gustava.

She scatters crumbs for the little brown hen.
There comes a rush and a flutter, and then
Down fly her little white doves so sweet,
With their snowy wings and crimson feet:
"Welcome!" cries little Gustava.

So dainty and eager they pick up the crumbs,
But who is this through the doorway comes?
Little Scotch terrier, little dog Rags,
Looks in her face, and his funny tail wags:
"Ha, ha!" laughs little Gustava.

"You want some breakfast, too?" and down
She sets her bowl on brick floor brown;
And little dog Rags drinks up her milk,
While she strokes his shaggy locks like silk;
"Dear Rags!" says little Gustava.

Waiting without stood sparrow and crow,
Cooling their feet in the melting snow:
"Won't you come in, good folk?" she cried.
But they were too bashful, and stayed outside,
Though "Pray come in!" cried Gustava.

So the last she threw them, and knelt on the mat
With doves and biddy and dog and cat.
And her mother came to the open house-door:
"Dear little daughter, I bring you some more,
My merry little Gustava!"

Kitty and terrier, biddy and doves,
All things harmless Gustava loves.
The shy, kind creatures 'tis joy to feed,
And oh, her breakfast is sweet indeed
To happy little Gustava!

Celia Thaxter

HIAWATHA'S CHILDHOOD

By the shores of Gitche Gumee
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.
Dark behind it rose the forest,
Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,
Rose the firs with cones upon them;
Bright before it beat the water,
Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha,
Tucked him in his linden cradle,
Bedded soft in moss and rushes,
Safely bound with reindeer sinews;
Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush! the Naked Bear will hear thee!"

Lulled him into slumber, singing,
"Ewa-yea! my little owlet!
Who is this that lights the wigwam?
With his great eyes lights the wigwam?
Ewa-yea! my little owlet!"

Many things Nokomis taught him
Of the stars that shine in heaven;
Showed him Ishkoodah, the comet,
Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses;
Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits,
Warriors with their plumes and war-clubs,
Flaring far away to northward
In the frosty nights of Winter;
Showed the broad white road in heaven,
Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,
Running straight across the heavens,
Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.

At the door, on summer evenings,
Sat the little Hiawatha;
Heard the whispering of the pine-trees,
Heard the lapping of the waters,
Sounds of music, words of wonder;
"Minne-wawa!" said the water;
"Mudway-aushka," said the water.

Saw the fire-fly Wah-wah-taysee,
Flitting through the dusk of evening,

With the twinkle of its candle
Lighting up the brakes and bushes,
And he sang the song of children,
Sang the song Nokomis taught him;
"Wah-wah-taysee, little fire-fly,
Little, flitting, white-fire insect,
Little, dancing, white-fire creature,
Light me with your little candle,
Ere upon my bed I lay me,
Ere in sleep I close my eyelids!"

Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water,
Saw the flecks and shadows on it,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered;
"Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her;
'Tis her body that you see there."

Saw the rainbow in the heavens,
In the eastern sky, the rainbow,
Whispered, "What is that, Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered:
"'Tis the heaven of flowers you see there:
All the wild-flowers of the forest,

CORYDON
BELL

All the lilies of the prairie,
When on earth they fade and perish,
Blossom in that heaven above us."

When he heard the owls at midnight,
Hooting, laughing in the forest,
"What is that?" he cried in terror,
"What is that," he said, "Nokomis?"
And the good Nokomis answered;
"That is but the owl and owlet,
Talking in their native language,
Talking, scolding at each other."

Then the little Hiawatha
Learned of every bird its language,
Learned their names and all their secrets,
How they built their nests in Summer,
Where they hid themselves in Winter,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them "Hiawatha's Chickens."

Of all beasts he learned the language,
Learned their names and all their secrets.
How the beavers built their lodges,
Where the squirrels hid their acorns,
How the reindeer ran so swiftly,
Why the rabbit was so timid,
Talked with them whene'er he met them,
Called them Hiawatha's Brothers.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

SHUH'S HUNTING

1. Shuh has gone hunting,
Mounted in his chariot and four.
The reins are in his grasp like ribbons,
While the two outside horses move with
regular steps, as dancers do.
Shuh is at the marshy ground;—
The fire flames out all at once,
And with bared arms he seizes a tiger,
And presents it before the duke.
O Shuh, try not such sport again;
Beware of getting hurt.

2. Shuh has gone hunting,
Mounted in his chariot with four bay horses.
The two inside are the finest possible animals,
And the two outside follow them regularly as in
a flying flock of wild geese.
Shuh is at the marshy ground;—
The fire blazes up all at once.
A skilful archer is Shuh!
A good charioteer also!
Now he gives his horses the reins; now he brings
them up;
Now he discharges his arrow; now he follows it.

3. Shuh has gone hunting,
Mounted in his chariot with four grey horses.
The two inside have their heads in a line,
And the two outside come after like arms.
Shuh is at the marsh;—
The fire spreads grandly all together.
His horses move slowly;
He shoots but seldom;
Now he lays aside his quiver;
Now he returns his bow to the case.

Odes of Ching

WISHING

Ring-ting! I wish I were a Primrose,
A bright yellow Primrose blowing in the spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the Elm-tree for our King!

Nay,—stay! I wish I were an Elm-tree,
A great lofty Elm-tree, with green leaves gay!
The winds would set them dancing,
The sun and moonshine glancing,
The Birds would house among the boughs,
And sweetly sing!

O—no! I wish I were a Robin,
A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go,
  Through forest, field, or garden,
  And ask no leave or pardon,
Till winter comes with icy thumbs
  To ruffle up our wing.

Well,—tell! where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
  Before a day was over,
  Home comes the rover,
For a Mother's kiss—sweeter this
    Than any other thing!

William Allingham

"ONE, TWO, THREE"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
  And a boy that was half-past three;
And the way that they played together
  Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go romping and jumping,
  And the boy, no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
  With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
  Out under the maple-tree
And the game that they played I'll tell you,
  Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
  Though you'd never have known it to be—
With an old, old, old, old lady,
  And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
  On his one little sound right knee,
And he'd guess where she was hiding,
  In guesses One, Two, Three!

"You are in the china closet!"
  He would cry, and laugh with glee—
It wasn't the china closet;
  But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in Papa's big bedroom,
  In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are *warm* and *warmer;*
  But you're not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
  Where Mama's things used to be—
So it must be the clothes-press, Gran'ma!"
  And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and Two and Three.

And they never had stirred from their places,
Right under the maple-tree—
This old, old, old, old lady
And the boy with the lame little knee—
This dear, dear, dear old lady
And the boy who was half-past three.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

EVENING HYMN

I hear no voice, I feel no touch,
I see no glory bright;
But yet I know that God is near,
In darkness as in light.

He watches ever by my side,
And hears my whispered prayer:
The Father for His little child
Both night and day doth care.

Anonymous

THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
  Little lamb, who made thee?
  Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
  Little lamb, God bless thee!
  Little lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake

A PRAYER

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
Thy love go with me all the night,
And wake me with the morning light.

Anonymous

A PRAYER

Father, we thank Thee for the night
And for the pleasant morning light,
For rest and food and loving care,

And all that makes the world so fair.
Help us to do the thing we should,
To be to others kind and good,
In all we do, in all we say,
To grow more loving every day.

Anonymous

CRADLE SONGS

BYE, BABY, NIGHT IS COME

Bye, baby, day is over,
Bees are drowsing in the clover,
  Bye, baby, bye.
Now the sun to bed is gliding,
All the pretty flowers are hiding,
  Bye, baby, bye.

Bye, baby, birds are sleeping,
One by one the stars are peeping;
  Bye, baby, bye.
In the far-off sky they twinkle,
While the cows come "tinkle, tinkle",
  Bye, baby, bye.

Bye, baby, mother holds thee;
Loving, tender care enfolds thee;
  Bye, baby, bye.
Angels in thy dreams caress thee,
Through the darkness guard and bless thee,
  Bye, baby, bye.

Mary Mapes Dodge

EVENING SONG

Little birds sleep sweetly
In their soft round nests,
Crouching in the cover
Of their mothers' breasts.
Little lambs lie quiet,
All the summer night,
With their old ewe mothers,
Warm, and soft, and white.

But more sweet and quiet
Lie our little heads,
With our dear mothers
Sitting by our beds;
And their soft sweet voices
Sing our hushabyes,
While the room grows darker.
As we shut our eyes.

And we play at evening
Round our fathers' knees;
Birds are not so merry,
Singing on the trees;
Lambs are not so happy,
'Mid the meadow flowers;
They have play and pleasures,
But not love like ours.

Cecil Frances Alexander

GOOD NIGHT

Baby, baby, lay your head
On your pretty cradle-bed;
Shut your eye-peeps, now the day
And the light are gone away:
All the clothes are tucked in tight;
Little baby dear, good night.

Yes, my darling, well I know
How the bitter wind doth blow;
And the winter's snow and rain
Patter on the window-pane:
But they cannot come in here,
To my little baby dear.

For the window is shut fast,
Till the stormy night is past;
And the curtains warm are spread
Round about her cradle bed:
So, till morning shineth bright,
Little baby dear, good night!

Ann and Jane Taylor

AN INDIAN LULLABY

Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, little brown baby,
Safe in the green branch so high,
Shut your bright black eyes and go to sleep, baby,
While the wood-wind sings, "Hush-a-by-by."

"Hush-a-by-hush," 'tis the voice of the forest,
"Hush-a-by-hush," the leaves seem to say,
"Hush-a-by-hush," sing the wild birds in chorus
Up in the tree-tops so far, far away.

Rock-a-by, rock-a-by, swinging so gently,
See, from the dark woods so cool and so deep,
The little gray squirrel, the timid brown rabbit,
Are coming to see if pappoose is asleep.

Mother will watch by her little brown baby,
Swinging aloft on the green branch so high,
No harm can come to the little brown baby,
Hush-a-by, rock-a-by, hush-a-by-by.

Anonymous

INDIAN LULLABY

Rock-a-by, hush-a-by, little pappoose,
The stars come into the sky,
The whippoorwill's crying, the daylight is dying,
The river runs murmuring by.

The pine trees are slumbering, little pappoose,
The squirrel has gone to his nest,
The robins are sleeping, the mother bird's keeping
The little ones warm with her breast.

The roebuck is dreaming, my little pappoose,
His mate lies asleep at his side,
The breezes are pining, the moonbeams are shining
All over the prairie wide.

Then hush-a-by, rock-a-by, little pappoose,
You sail on the river of dreams;
Dear Manitou loves you, and watches above you
Till time when the morning light gleams.

Charles Myall

FRAGMENT OF A SLEEPY SONG

Sister Simplicitie,
Sing, sing a song to me,
Sing me to sleep.
Some legend low and long,
Slow as the summer song
Of the dull deep.

. . . . . .

Sing up and down to me
Like a dream-boat at sea,
So, and still so,
Float through the then and when,
Rising from when to then,
Sinking from then to when
While the waves go.

Low and high, high and low,
Now and then, then and now,
Now, now;
And when the now is then, and when
the then is now,

And when the low is high, and when
the high is low,
Low, low;

Let me float, let the boat
Go, go;
Let me glide, let me slide
Slow, slow;
Gliding boat, sliding boat,
Slow, slow;
Glide away, slide away,
So, so.

Sydney Dobell

THE WHITE SEAL'S LULLABY

Oh! hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us.
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.
Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow;
Ah, weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.

Rudyard Kipling

GAELIC LULLABY

Hush! the waves are rolling in,
White with foam, white with foam;
Father toils amid the din;
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the winds roar hoarse and deep,—
On they come, on they come.
Brother seeks the wandering sheep;
But baby sleeps at home.

Hush! the rain sweeps o'er the knolls,
Where they roam, where they roam;
Sister goes to seek the cows;
But baby sleeps at home.

Anonymous

NURSERY SONG

As I walked over the hill one day,
I listened, and heard a mother sheep say—
"In all the green world there is nothing so sweet
As my little lammie, with his nimble feet,
With his eyes so bright,
And his wool so white,
Oh! he is my darling, my heart's delight."
And the mother sheep and her little one
Side by side lay down in the sun;
And they went to sleep on the hillside warm,
While my little lammie lies here on my arm.

I went to the kitchen and what did I see
But the old gray cat with her kittens three!
I heard her whispering soft; said she,
"My kittens with tails so cunningly curled
Are the prettiest things that can be in the world;
The bird on the tree,
And the old ewe, she,
May love their babies exceedingly,
But I love my kittens there,
Under the rocking chair,
I love my kittens with all my might,
And I love them morning, noon, and night,
Now I'll take my kitties, the kitties I love,

And we'll lie down together beneath the warm stove."
Let the kittens sleep under the stove so warm,
While my little darling lies here on my arm.

I went to the yard, and I saw the old hen,
Go clucking about with her chickens ten;
She clucked and she scratched and she bustled away,
And what do you think I heard the hen say?
I heard her say, "The sun never did shine
On anything like these chickens of mine!
You may hunt the full moon and stars if you please,
But you will never find ten such chickens as these.
My dear downy darlings, my sweet little things,
Come nestle now cosily under my wings,"
So the hen said,
And the chickens all sped
As fast as they could to their nice feather bed;
And there let them sleep in the feathers so warm,
While my little chick lies here on my arm.

Ann A. G. Carter

SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP

Sleep, baby, sleep!
Thy father watches the sheep.
Thy mother is shaking the dreamland tree,
And down falls a little dream on thee.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Sleep, baby, sleep!
The large stars are the sheep;
The little stars are the lambs, I guess,
The big round moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep!

Old Lullaby

A SLEEPY SONG

The butterfly swings on the flower asleep,
And the little bird sleeps in the tree;
And down where the burrow is quiet and deep,
The little gray rabbits, all cuddle a-heap—
So my baby must nestle to me.
By-low!
Nestle so closely to me.

The butterfly danced in the fields all day
And the birdie sang blithe on the bough;
And the little gray rabbits, they scampered in play—
But now they're in Slumberland, all tucked away,
For this is the sleepy time now—
By-low!
Sleepy time, sleepy time now!

Charles Buxton Going

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD

(Dutch Lullaby)

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
  Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
  Into a sea of dew.
"Where are you going, and what do you wish?"
  The old moon asked the three.
"We have come to fish for the herring fish
  That live in this beautiful sea:
  Nets of silver and gold have we!"
    Said Wynken,
    Blynken,
    And Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
  As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long
  Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring fish
  That lived in that beautiful sea—
"Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
  Never afeard are we;"
  So cried the stars to the fishermen three:
    Wynken,
    Blynken,
    And Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
To the stars in the twinkling foam—
Then down from the skies came the wooden shoe,
Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail it seemed
As if it could not be,
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea—
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea,
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:
Wynken,
Blynken,
And Nod.

Eugene Field

SONG

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the western sea!
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one,
    sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
    sleep.

Alfred Tennyson

LULLABY

Sleep, my little one, sleep,
For twinkling stars will light the way
To dreamland just a dream away—
So, sleep, my baby, sleep—
Sleep, sleep, sleep.

Sleep, my little one, sleep,
For little clouds are sailing by
To find their cradles in the sky—
So, sleep, my baby, sleep—
Sleep, sleep, sleep.

Sleep, my little one, sleep—
The little birds no longer cheep—
But 'neath the mother wings they creep,
So, sleep, my baby, sleep—
Sleep, sleep, sleep.

Sleep, my little one, sleep—
The silver moon is watching thee,
Her little beams have come to see
My baby going to sleep—
Sleep, sleep, sleep.

Sarah Jane S. Harrington

CRADLE-SONG

From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus-stream,
I bring for you,
Aglint with dew,
A little lovely dream.

Sweet, shut your eyes,
The wild fire-flies
Dance through the fairy *neem;*
From the poppy-bole
For you I stole
A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good-night,
In golden light
The stars around you gleam;
On you I press
With soft caress
A little lovely dream.

Sarojini Naidu

A SLEEPY SONG

As soon as the fire burns red and low,
And the house up-stairs is still,
She sings me a queer little sleepy song,
Of sheep that go over a hill.

The good little sheep run quick and soft,
Their colors are gray and white:
They follow their leader nose to tail,
For they must be home by night.

And one slips over and one comes next,
And one runs after behind,
The gray one's nose at the white one's tail,
The top of the hill they find.

And when they get to the top of the hill
They quietly slip away,
But one runs over and one comes next—
Their colors are white and gray.

And over they go, and over they go,
And over the top of the hill,
The good little sheep run quick and soft,
And the house up-stairs is still.

And one slips over and one comes next,
The good little, gray little sheep!
I watch how the fire burns red and low,
And she says that I fall asleep.

Josephine Daskam Bacon

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